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Washington Wildlife First Denounces Execution of Sherman Pack Wolf
*Washington's wildlife agency has now killed 51 wolves for the beef industry,
more than 70% of whom were killed on behalf of a single beef producer*

Tacoma, WA – Washington Wildlife First (WW1) denounced the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for the senseless slaughter of a female member of the Sherman Pack wolf family that [WDFW announced earlier today](#).

This female wolf is the 51st state-endangered wolf the agency has killed at the behest of the beef industry over the past 13 years, even as wolves still struggle to recover across Washington. She also marks the 36th wolf WDFW has killed on behalf of the family that runs Diamond M Ranch—accounting for over 70% of the wolves WDFW has killed.

“It is shocking that Director Kelly Susewind continues to kill wolves on behalf of this family, even though he is keenly aware of Diamond M’s consistent failure to take reasonable actions to protect its cows,” said WW1 Science and Advocacy Director Dr. Francisco J. Santiago-Ávila. “The agency nonsensically talks about these killings as a method of ‘changing pack behavior,’ but it is abundantly clear in this case that the real problem is human behavior.”

Conflicts with Diamond M cattle led to WDFW’s destruction [of several entire wolf packs](#) whose territories overlapped with its grazing allotments in the Colville National Forest in northeastern Washington, including the Wedge Pack in 2012, the Profanity Peak Pack in 2016, the Sherman Pack in 2017, and the Old Profanity Territory (OPT) Pack in 2018 and 2019. WDFW has also killed individual wolves in several other packs after they have come into conflict with cattle belonging to Diamond M or other members of the family that owns Diamond M.

Diamond M proprietor Len McIrvin has [repeatedly insisted that](#) non-lethal solutions are ineffective, and said that the only compensation he wants for his losses is [“a dead wolf for every dead calf.”](#) He has been outspoken in his opposition to wolf recovery, asserting that there [“is no room for wolves in Washington state.”](#) He has also made implicit threats to illegally kill wolves himself if WDFW refuses to do it for him—commenting, for example, that [“\[o\]ur ancestors knew what had to happen — you get poison and you kill the wolves.”](#)

According to its 2017 Wolf-Livestock Interaction Protocol (Protocol), WDFW will not consider killing wolves unless it has documented the use of at least two proactive, non-lethal measures to mitigate conflict. But internal WDFW documents show Susewind waives those requirements for Diamond M.

Diamond M’s record is well documented. A [2017 film](#) focused on WDFW’s destruction of the Profanity Peak pack in 2016, after Diamond M placed a salt block for its cattle 200 meters away from the Profanity Peak den site, causing the cattle to congregate right on the pack’s doorstep. Despite repeated agency requests, Diamond M refused to move either the salt block or its cattle for weeks, even after conflict began. Similar scenarios repeated themselves in 2017, 2018, and 2019, leading WDFW to target three more packs in the same area of the Colville National Forest.

In addition to concentrating its cattle in core wolf areas, Diamond M has consistently attracted wolves to its herds by leaving dead, sick, and injured cattle on its allotments. McIrvin has conceded that they do not provide even nominal care or supervision for their animals, admitting that [“\[t\]here are many cows we won’t see all summer long.”](#) Even worse, Diamond M illegally abandons some of its cows on the allotments to die in harsh winter conditions. It has routinely refused to use effective “range riders” to supervise and protect its cattle, sometimes even declining free assistance offered by WDFW.

“Diamond M’s record suggests that it is more interested in dead wolves than live cows. Science has shown that combining non-lethal deterrents with proactive husbandry practices is the most effective approach to mitigate conflict with wolves,” said Santiago-Ávila, who studied predator conflicts at the Carnivore Coexistence Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has authored many papers on the subject. “Yet Diamond M consistently refuses to take commonsense measures to protect its cattle, and WDFW consistently gives Diamond M a pass and agrees to kill wolves on its behalf anyway.”

Santiago-Ávila pointed out that there are no reliable studies indicating that killing wolves decreases conflicts, and that the ineffectiveness of WDFW’s “lethal control” is shown by the fact that it has repeatedly killed wolves in the same areas year after year.

More than 80% of the wolves WDFW has targeted were killed, at least in part, due to predations of cattle grazing on public lands, predominantly within the Colville National Forest. Beef producers pay just \$1.35 a month per cow-calf pair to graze their cattle in the forest, where [McIrvin has claimed](#) it is impossible to protect his herds due to the rough, mountainous country and heavy timber.

“WDFW has killed far more wolves in the Colville Forest than in any other area of the state,” Santiago-Ávila said. “This area is ideal habitat for wolves, and a terrible place to graze cattle. Diamond M complains that it is impossible to protect cattle in this rough country. But the question we need to ask is why Washington is spending taxpayer money to rid our national forests of natural predators and turn them into cheap, safe grazing pastures for the beef industry.”

In 2023, WW1 joined with other wildlife advocacy organizations to petition the state wildlife commission to approve a rule that would strengthen requirements for the use of non-lethal deterrent measures and limit the circumstances under which the state could kill wolves, including banning WDFW from killing wolves on public lands. Although former [Governor Jay Inslee ordered](#) the commission to take action on this petition in January 2024, it has thus far refused to do so.

“It is long past time for the commission to muster the courage to take on this issue,” Santiago-Ávila said. “We’ve known for a long time that Susewind ignores the agency’s own protocol to serve the beef industry, but the responsibility for allowing that to continue is at the feet of the commission.”

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