



Contact:

Dr. Francisco J. Santiago-Ávila
Science and Advocacy Director
Washington Wildlife First
fran@wawildlifefirst.org
(608) 285-2738

Timothy Coleman
Executive Director
Kettle Range Conservation Group
tcoleman@kettlerange.org
(509) 775-2667

Brooks Fahy
Executive Director
Predator Defense
brooks@predatordefense.org
(541) 520-6003

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Wolf Advocates Voluntarily Dismiss Lawsuit After Protecting Sherman Pack

Advocates conclude litigation after blocking agency kill order, which was not renewed in 2025

Seattle, WA – Wolf advocates announced today that they have voluntarily dismissed a King County lawsuit against the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) that prevented WDFW from executing an [October 2025 kill order](#) that would have destroyed the Sherman wolf pack.

“We achieved our main objective, giving the Sherman wolf pack a chance to survive through the winter despite heavy losses at the hands of poachers and the state,” said Dr. Francisco J. Santiago-Ávila, Science & Advocacy Director at Washington Wildlife First. “But we were shocked by what the litigation revealed, showing the extent to which the Department is willing to ignore science, the opinions of its own experts, and its responsibilities as a trustee of Washington’s wildlife to cater to the demands of irresponsible beef producers who refuse to take the most basic steps to protect their cattle.”

Washington Wildlife First, Predator Defense, the Kettle Range Conservation Group, and wolf advocate Martha Hall [filed the lawsuit](#) to block the order issued by WDFW Deputy Director Amy Windrope to kill one of the last two adult wolves in the Sherman pack. On October 14, a King County court commissioner granted the advocates’ request for a temporary restraining order, blocking WDFW from killing wolves until the October 9, 2025, kill order had expired.

WDFW did not renew the kill order after its expiration. Following a hearing on October 31, 2025, a King County Superior Court judge denied the plaintiffs’ request for a preliminary injunction, based in part on WDFW’s representation that there was no active kill order and the case was moot. The plaintiffs’ decision to voluntarily withdraw the case comes after WDFW moved to dismiss it as moot late last year.

“Since we reached the end of 2025 without WDFW renewing its efforts to destroy the Sherman pack, we accept that the challenge to this specific kill order is now moot,” said Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense. “However, we will be watching closely to see if future legal action is needed.”

The Sherman pack had at least five adult wolves at the beginning of 2025, and produced up to six pups that spring, but it had already suffered devastating losses prior to Windrope’s order. In May 2025, an unnamed livestock producer shot and killed an adult male wolf from the pack. On August 26, WDFW killed an adult female Sherman wolf following an order by WDFW Director Kelly Susewind. That same

month, WDFW found another dead wolf from the pack, whose killing is still under investigation. Windrope's order would have almost certainly doomed the pups to starvation and destroyed the pack.

Windrope issued the order in response to demands by Diamond M Ranch, whose cattle graze largely unprotected on public lands in the Colville National Forest. Of the 51 state-endangered wolves WDFW has killed on behalf of beef producers since 2011, [more than 70% were targeted](#) after conflicts with cattle owned by the family that operates Diamond M.

If WDFW had carried out Windrope's order, it would mark the fifth wolf pack it has destroyed at the behest of Diamond M, including three packs that settled in the same region of the Kettle Range of the Colville National Forest: the Profanity Peak Pack in 2016, the Sherman Pack in 2017, and the Old Profanity Territory (OPT) Pack in 2018 and 2019.

"Cattle grazing in the Kettle Range is a relic of history made possible by the government-sponsored eradication of wolves in the 1930s," said Timothy Coleman, executive director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group. "Tragically, WDFW has shown itself willing to repeat the mistakes of the past, exterminating wolves in this region year after year at the behest of beef producers, who release their cattle every spring to wander unprotected in the forest, destroying habitat and degrading the watershed."

Documents WDFW disclosed during the litigation revealed that Windrope issued the kill order in violation of the state wolf recovery plan and WDFW's own management protocol, and despite opposition from many of its experts. One primary reason staff experts opposed the renewed kill order is that Diamond M knowingly and repeatedly ignored WDFW's instructions and left cattle carcasses out on its public forest allotments, attracting the wolves who preyed on unprotected cattle. Both the recovery plan and WDFW's protocol clearly forbid the use of lethal control when wolves are being lured into conflicts by this kind of attractant.

"Unfortunately, this situation is not unique. The Department routinely disregards science and ignores its own policies and protocols to cater to the demands of beef producers, placing private industry profits over the interests of Washington's wildlife and the will of the Washington people," Santiago-Ávila said, noting that a [2021 poll](#) showed that only 22% of Washington voters support killing wolves on public land when beef producers have not taken reasonable steps to protect their cattle.

Santiago-Ávila emphasized that although this case has concluded, its [broader efforts to reform Washington's wolf policy](#) will continue. He concluded that "If WDFW continues to ignore science and reason to kill endangered wolves for irresponsible beef producers, it should be ready to go back to court."

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The case is *Hall, et. al v. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, et. al.*, No. 25-2-30119-2, in King County Superior Court. The petitioners are represented by the firm Animal & Earth Advocates, PLLC.