

Congratulations on joining the Pacific Wolf Coalition's Packtivists!

When we say your voice matters, we mean it. By taking action in support of wolf recovery, even the small steps count. As wolves return to the Pacific states of California, Oregon, and Washington they do so on a vastly different social, political, and ecological landscape than elsewhere in the country. Wolves need each other and their packs to survive and thrive. By working together, metaphorically as a wolf pack – a pack of activists, and by amplifying our voices together, you, too, can help the Pacific Wolf Coalition in our wolf recovery efforts of these magnificent apex predators. By providing you with an action toolkit, we call it our *Packtivist Kit*, you can be the voice for wolves.

Before drafting your letter or testifying at a public meeting, here's some background information on wolves and their conservation status in California, Oregon and Washington. We call it **Wolves 101: A Brief Lesson**. Enjoy!

Wolves 101: A Brief Lesson

Species: Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*)

Diet: Carnivore

Size: 26-32 inches tall; 4.5-6.5 feet long and one of the largest mammalian carnivores found in the Pacific West, next to the Grizzly Bear, Black Bear and Mountain Lion (Cougar)

Weight: 55-130 lbs.

Lifespan in the wild: 7-8 years

Diet: Primary prey consists of ungulates, or hooved mammals, such as deer or elk. Though wolves generally rely on large prey species, they are opportunists and have also been known to consume smaller mammals, such as beavers or rabbits, as well as scavenge upon already-dead animals. During periods of abundant food, wolves can eat up to 30 pounds of meat per day. Fluctuating environmental conditions require wolves to adapt to sudden abundances of prey often followed by days of prey scarcity.

Behavior: Wolves are social animals that usually live in packs. Packs are typically family groups that consist of a breeding male and female (also called the breeding

pair) and their offspring. Sometimes called "alphas," the breeding pair are usually responsible for tracking and hunting prey, establishing territories, finding den sites, and reproducing. Subordinate wolves often assist in rearing young pups, hunting, and other responsibilities. Sometimes wolves depart from their pack to establish new territories and form new packs. This is called dispersal. One of the most exciting aspects of wolf research is our constantly-evolving understanding of their complex social dynamics.

Communication is an important component of wolves' social structures. Wolves use a complex system of vocalizations ranging from barks and whines, to growls and howls to communicate within and between packs. Researchers have recently found that howls are unique to individual wolves, allowing individual identification by wildlife managers, researchers and other wolves. Wolves also communicate through body postures, positions of the ears and tail, facial expressions, and by scent-marking.

Territories and Range: The distribution of wolves across a landscape primarily depends on territoriality. Territories are areas of habitat occupied and defended by a single wolf pack. These territories can vary in size depending on prey density, wolf population density, and other factors but must be large enough for adult wolves to ensure the survival of their offspring. Territories have been documented as small as 50 square miles to as large as 1,000 square miles. Within these territories, wolves can travel as far as 30 miles a day. While this is what we know now, ongoing research continues to reveal more about wolves' dispersal and travel.

At one point in time, wolves were common throughout the North American landscape and, in fact the gray wolf species was once the most widely-ranging mammal on the planet, occupying nearly the entire northern hemisphere. Due to a systematic extermination program of trapping, hunting, and poisoning by humans, wolves came close to extinction in the continental United States, have been rendered entirely extinct in some countries and their populations have been severely reduced in other parts of the world. With the help of recovery efforts, gray wolf populations are beginning to rebound, but in North America their populations are limited to Canada and portions of the U.S., including Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, California, Wisconsin, Wyoming and most recently a gray wolf sighting in Nevada (April 2017). While wolves have begun to make a promising comeback in North America, they still only occupy a fraction of their historical range. The Mexican wolf, a subspecies of the gray wolf, is also making a slow, recovery in Arizona and New Mexico. In the southeastern U.S., red wolves are slowly recovering as well.

Reproduction: In a given year, the breeding male and female of a stable pack mate in January or February and typically produce four to seven pups. The breeding female gives birth around the end of April in a den. Pups are raised by the whole pack until they reach maturity at 10 months. Not all pups survive to adulthood. Some will stay with their pack their entire lives while others eventually disperse to find new territories and establish a pack of their own.

Population: Currently, the U.S. is home to more than 5,000 wolves in the lower 48 states and an estimated 7,000 to 11,200 wolves in Alaska. The vast majority of wolves outside Alaska are found in six states in the upper Midwest and Intermountain West. Globally, wolf populations are estimated to be 200,000 individuals spread across 57 countries. Though wolves dominated the North American landscape in the past, persecution by humans through the 1930's caused wolf populations to plummet, leaving one small population in far northeastern Minnesota. This represents a small part of the historical population estimates of 2 million wolves in North America alone and even more worldwide.

Conservation Status:

Washington: Wolves began to return to Washington from the north and west in the late-1990s. By the end of 2016, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reported at least 115 wolves reside in Washington, consisting of 20 packs and 10 breeding pairs, showing a roughly 30 percent annual population growth rate. Wolves are classified as endangered under state law, and as endangered in the western two-thirds of the state under federal law. A state wolf conservation and management plan was approved in 2011, requiring a persistent and well-distributed wolf population for recovery. Wolves have recovered in northeast Washington, but poaching in the northern Cascades has set back statewide recovery, highlighting the importance of the state's Wolf Advisory Group for building social tolerance for wolves and processing tough issues. The multi-stakeholder Group has a key role in preventing wolf-livestock conflicts through deterrence planning, range riders, guard dogs and other measures, as well as diminishing threats to wolf recovery from the state legislature.

Oregon: Oregon's last wolf bounty was collected in 1947. Just four years after wolves were reintroduced to the Western US to augment populations returning on their own, the first known wolf returned to Oregon in 1999. A permanent presence of wolves in Oregon began with the confirmation of B-300, a wolf from Idaho who dispersed to Oregon and became the breeding female of the Imnaha pack in 2008. At the end of 2016, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife confirmed there are at least 112 wolves

consisting of 12 packs and 8 breeding pairs in Oregon. Wolves in the western two-thirds of Oregon are still protected by the federal ESA. Congress stripped federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections from wolves in Oregon's eastern third in 2011 as part of a must-pass funding bill, setting the dangerous precedent of removing a species from the Endangered Species Act through legislative action. Management of wolves there is guided by the state's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan which was written in 2005 and has been revised several times. In 2015 the state removed state Endangered Species Act protections from wolves.

California: In December 2011 a gray wolf was documented in California for the first time in 87 years. Wolf OR-7 or "Journey," traveled from northeastern Oregon throughout Northern California and returned to Oregon after a multi-year journey where he eventually found a mate and sired pups in Oregon every year since they established their territory in 2014. In 2014, a petition to protect wolves under California's state Endangered Species Act was approved by the state. In August 2015 the state's first wolf family, the Shasta pack, consisting of two adults and five pups, was confirmed in Siskiyou County. The California Department of Fish & Wildlife released a draft Wolf Conservation and Management Plan in late 2015 and accepted public comments through February 15, 2016. A final version of the Plan was released in late 2016.

The Importance of Wolves: Like all native wildlife, wolves play a key role in keeping ecosystems healthy. As a keystone species, their presence or absence has a disproportionate impact. Wolves can help keep deer and elk populations in check (as well as other wild ungulates wolves may feed on, such as bison, moose and caribou), can help reduce the spread of disease in some ungulate populations and may even alter ungulates' behavior. Since unchecked overbrowsing by wild ungulates can heavily impact plant communities, this can benefit plant species and many other animal species including fish and songbirds.

Wolves tend to prey on weaker elk and deer instead of "trophy bulls" commonly targeted by human hunters. By culling weaker animals from the herds, wolves can help maintain the overall health of these animals and the habitat they share. The carcasses of wolves' prey also help redistribute nutrients and provides food for other wildlife species like grizzly bears, black bears, coyotes, ravens, beetles, and other scavengers. Scientists are just beginning to fully understand the positive and complex ripple effects that wolves have on ecosystems, but it's becoming increasingly clear that wolves play a critical and irreplaceable role. As the great conservationist Aldo Leopold said, "The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, 'What good is it?' If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course

of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.”

Living with Wolves: As wolves return to the west, it will impact the way livestock operators do business. All farms in wolf territory – from small hobby farms to large sprawling ranches – will need to learn to live with wolves. Rural communities share the landscape with wild wolves, so it is important for these communities to have the tools to succeed and reduce conflict with the returning predator on the landscape. Lessons learned from ranchers in Alberta, Montana, and across the west can ease this transition.

Most successful wolf-livestock conflict deterrence efforts involve programs designed to help fund and implement preventative measures, such as calving on fenced property, using range riders to increase human presence, and the removal of sick or dead livestock to avoid attracting predators. However, each ranching operation is different and coexistence is not a ‘one-shoe-fits-all’ scenario. Preventative measures should be considered a priority, matching the unique situation of each ranch. In some areas, ranchers taking steps to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts receive compensation from the state for the value of their losses if a confirmed wolf depredation occurs.

Coexistence between people, livestock and predators may not always be easy, but it is possible to find success where people, livestock and predators share the same space.

Threats: There are a number of threats facing wolves, but here are four primary threats:

- **Conflict With Humans** - In areas where there are people, livestock and wolves, the most common cause of death for wolves is conflict with people over potential or actual livestock losses. Another conflict with humans occurs when wolves are in areas where hunting and trapping is allowed. It’s also very important to note that in areas where no wolf hunting or trapping is allowed, the most common cause of wolf mortality is interpack strife with other wolves.
- **Intolerance** – Overall, the greatest threat to wolves is prejudice, fear and misunderstanding about the species. Many fairy tales and myths, from Little Red Riding Hood to Three Little Pigs, have misrepresented wolves as villainous, dangerous creatures and these myths have been perpetuated over time. It is a slow process to undo centuries of misinformation. Wolf and wildlife policy are often dictated by social and political agenda that have more to do with humans than wildlife and often harm conservation efforts.

- **Habitat Loss** - As human development encroaches upon the habitat of wolves and their prey, habitat becomes degraded and fragmented. Wolves may have to travel across lands with varying degrees of protection, or cross highways, developed areas, and large portions of private lands where they are more likely to come into conflict with humans.
- **Diminishing Protections** – Wolves have been restored to only very limited portions of their historical range. Diminishing Endangered Species Act protections at the state and federal level could derail wolf recovery efforts in areas around the country where it has barely begun. The Pacific states of Washington, Oregon and California represent an example of this as wolf recovery has only just begun and the loss of state and federal protections will impact wolf recovery. The loss of protections often results in more killing, and also results in decreased social acceptance. This social acceptance is perhaps what wolves need more than anything else.

Conservation & Coexistence: Despite all the challenges thrown in their way, gray wolves are undoubtedly reclaiming their previous territory at a rapid pace. While much of their habitat has changed drastically with the expansion of farms and towns and other human development, wolves are incredibly adaptable creatures.

As wolves return to places once called home, the responsibility for understanding their needs and fostering for the return of wolves in the West Coast states and elsewhere lies with us. Learning about wolves, protecting them and their habitat, and helping affected ranching families and communities co-exist with wolves is essential for wolves' continued existence and for our own need and desire for a healthy planet.

Calling All, Packtivists!

As humans, many of us have a deeply-rooted passion for helping or wanting to help. This could be helping rescue animals. It could be helping a family member, friend, child, or stranger. It could be helping protect wild and endangered animals. It could be helping protect wild and endangered plants. It could be preventing a bad development or building project in your community. It could be helping protect wild spaces. It could be any cause or policy that we feel passionate about supporting – or opposing, in some cases.

We know exactly what it feels like to care for something so much, to appreciate it so greatly, that when we consider what life would be like without it, it can be heartbreaking and even infuriating. Let's say a species of wild animal you've cared about since you were a child, since you first saw its tracks on the trail you followed, is no longer protected. How would you feel? What would you do about it?

That 'DO' part is action – an act of will or something done. However, sometimes more important is recognizing why we feel the way we do about the things we care about most. That emotional connection, on whatever level it may be, helps give us the motivation, energy and nudge to take action.

What exactly does activism mean? What does it mean to be an activist? An advocate?

One definition states that activism is a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. An activist is the individual responsible for seeing to it that an action takes place in support of or in opposition to a controversial issue. An advocate is also an individual who argues for or supports a cause of policy and may work for the actual cause or group. *That's YOU!*

Why is action important?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. ”

- Margaret Mead

When you've heard “your voice counts” or “you can make a difference” there is absolute truth to these statements. A single letter, in-person dialogue and a personal statement as testimony during public meetings or hearings can actually make a difference. Wolf recovery in the U.S. and especially within the Pacific states has just begun and remains fragile. Wolves face numerous obstacles as they return

to their historical range. As humans continue to develop communities and expand into areas in close proximity to natural wolf habitats, wolves will face increasing interaction with livestock, pets, and people. While it's important to recognize legitimate concerns, a vocal minority continue to fear and misunderstand wolves and speak out against wolves. It's important that those who value wolves and other wildlife speak up, too.

There are many economic, ecological, and social benefits to the return of wolves. Even so, increased contact between wolves, people, and livestock can mean conflict. There are many proactive strategies and tools to deter or minimize unnecessary conflict, instead of simply killing wolves. Even so, retaliation for lost livestock and fears of decreased deer or elk hunting opportunities may cause difficulties for wolves as they recover. These pressures in consonance with recent state and federal delisting proposals create major barriers for wolves to fully recover in the Pacific West states and throughout the U.S. An essential part of wolf recovery in the Pacific West states is you – your voice and support matter. Your voice and support is needed.

Everything You Do Matters

“I can do things you cannot. You can do things I cannot.
Together we can do great things.”
– Mother Teresa

You don't have to be an award-winning author, public speaker, or have a PhD in wildlife science, but it's helpful to be well-informed so you can have the confidence to speak for your values. Here are some helpful tips for letter-writing, making calls and preparing statements for public testimonies from resources available by the Defenders of Wildlife Citizen Advocate Handbook and the Oregon Wild Ones Activist Toolkit.

Letters Matter: Put it in Writing

Letter writing is still the most popular choice for communicating with decision makers. You can write a personal letter, or participate in an organized campaign and send a signed postcard. You can mail, fax or e-mail your letter. Each method has its positives and negatives and is treated differently depending on the office. The most important thing is ensuring your message is received. Regardless of the method you use to write a decision maker, it should include the following basics:

- The purpose of your communication. It's best to address one issue in each letter, and, if possible, keep it to one page.

- Your personal perspective. State why you care about this issue and why he/she should. If you're interested in wolves, birding or wildlife watching, science or economics, say so. We can't stress enough how important it is to personalize your letter. Wolf opponents often write personalized letters to lawmakers and decision-makers and that personalization is very effective. Wolf supporters must be even more effective and so our letters should be personalized, as well.
- The associated bill number if there is one (for example H.R.#, or S.#) and what you want them to do. State your position at the beginning of your letter and reiterate it at the end of your letter.
- Your full name and return address.

SAMPLE LETTER

October 2015

*C.S.**[return address]**Dear Commission Members,**California is in the middle of one of the most inspiring conservation stories in the state's history; the return of the gray wolf. The Golden State has its first wild wolf pack since 1924. We owe this success to the natural behavior of wild wolves and the protection from the state of Oregon.**Without a strong wild population of wolves in Oregon, the recolonization of California is not possible [...]**[...] However, the foundation we have laid means nothing if wolves do not have the opportunity to travel into our state.**In 2011 OR-7, an Imnaha pack member and Oregon native, began wolf recovery in California with his trek of more than 1,000 miles. His brother, OR-9, did not have the same chance. OR-9 dispersed into Idaho and was legally killed by a hunter. The legality of this kill was ensured by the lack of endangered species protection in the state. Oregon's state protections are the only reason OR-7 had the opportunity to take those landmark steps into California.**Those steps were not only a uniting event for California, but served as a map for the Shasta pack to find their home in this state. The breeding female of the Shasta pack began her life in Oregon, part of the Imnaha pack as well. Once again, Oregon's state protections are the only reason California has a wild wolf pack.**This long awaited homecoming of one of our native predators is celebrated by over 80% of Californians. The conversation to delist gray wolves in Oregon may seem like a local decision, but that could not be furthest from the truth. The entire state of California is more than affected by this decision as well. The connectivity of wolf populations ensures that the loss of necessary protections in one place will be detrimental to the recovery of wolves in another. Please consider California's right to future wolves when making this decision.**Sincerely,*

Also be sure to properly address your letter (contact information for various offices is provided below). For instance:

- To a senator: The Honorable [full name] (Room #) (name of) Senate Office Building U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510
 - Dear Senator [full name]:
- To a representative: The Honorable [full name] (Room #) (name of) House Office Building U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
 - Dear Representative [full name]:

Calls Matter: Pick up the Phone [adapted from the Defenders of Wildlife Citizen Advocate Handbook]

Here's a list of the contact information (you can also call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-225-3121) to connect with your decision makers on a federal and state level:

U.S. Dept. of the Interior

Secretary of the Interior: Ryan Zinke

Email: feedback@ios.doi.gov

Phone Number: 202-208-3100

Twitter: @SecretaryZinke

Department of Interior on Facebook

DOI Twitter: @Interior

Department of the Interior

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20240

President Donald Trump

[Link: https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/)

Phone: 202-456-1111

Twitter: @POTUS Trump

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20500

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Regional Director: Robyn Thorson

911 NE 11th Ave. Portland, Oregon 97232

503-231-6120

Robyn_Thorson@fws.gov

California Fish and Wildlife Department

Director: Charlton H. Bonham

1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 445-0411

Director@wildlife.ca.gov

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department

Director: Curt Melcher

4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE Salem, OR 97302

(503) 947-6000
odfw.info@state.or.us

Washington Fish and Wildlife Department

Director: Jim Unsworth

Mailing Add: 600 Capitol Way N. Olympia, WA 98501
 (360) 902-2200
director@dfw.wa.gov

Here are some recommended steps for making your call:

- Ask to be connected to your decision-maker's office.
- Share what it is you want to talk about and ask, "Are you the right person to talk to?" If they reply with 'no,' ask that your call be directed to the most appropriate person to address the issue which you wish to comment on. This may be an aide, as some decision-makers can be difficult to reach.
- You don't have to be an expert. The fact that you care is enough.
- Remember, your decision-makers represent you. It's important that they hear from you.
- Identify yourself by name as a constituent and tell the aide that you would like to leave a brief message such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support the Endangered Species Act and oppose any attempts to weaken protections for wildlife and habitat."
- Briefly state your reasons for your opinion and ask for your senator's/representative's position.
- It's good to be passionate, but always remember to be polite and constructive. Most likely the person taking your call isn't the decision-maker. You want them to carry your message as effectively as possible.
- You can also request a written response to your call.

Your Voice Matters: Speaking at Public Meetings and Providing Public Testimony

Testifying at a public hearing is a great way to be an effective advocate for wildlife. These provide opportunities for people to engage with legislators, commissioners and other government officials. Public speaking can be a nerve-wracking experience, but despite your nervousness, remember how important it is for decision-makers to hear from people who care about wildlife and the environment. Your testimony makes a difference and here's why:

- You are there representing an important cause
- Verbal testimony has an emotional impact on elected officials.
- News reporters frequently cover hearings, so you have a chance to convey your message to a broader audience.

- Making the time and effort to testify sends an important message to the agency and the public about your commitment and attention to the issue.
- Agencies are always under pressure and appreciate the support to do the right thing.

Always be respectful and courteous to the decision-makers, the audience and the other people providing testimony. You represent more than yourself! Here are some tips for effective testimony:

- *Give Yourself Time and Space to Prepare Your Statement:*
 - Testimony is usually limited to 2-3 minutes and it goes by faster than you might think!
 - **Stay within the time limit.**
 - Time your testimony and practice it beforehand so that it will fit within the time limits.
 - If you have a lot more to say, include it in your written testimony or ask someone else in your group to work it into his or her testimony.
 - In case time runs out on you before you have a chance to finish your remarks, be sure to have a point that you can skip to in summation - the point you want to leave them with.
 - Prepare your presentation to include two or three key points.
 - **Clearly state your position.**
 - Give a clear and concise description of your position on the issue or the bill.
 - Speak from your own experience. Say why you care.
 - You do not need to be an expert to testify.
 - Talk about how the policy in question affects you and people like you.
 - Try to use your own words and describe personal experiences during the testimony without being melodramatic.
 - Practice or role-play your testimony in front of a mirror or with your family.
 - **If you are comfortable, try not to read your testimony.**
 - If you're not comfortable winging it and don't want to read, a list of bullet points in large font may help.
 - The committee or council will listen to and appreciate your testimony more if you tell it from the heart and not from a script.
 - Your oral testimony does not have to be exactly the same as your written testimony.
 - You are more likely to be listened to if you don't have your head buried in a page.
 - Make eye contact!

- Prepare a written version of your testimony to submit.
- Arrive early:
 - Arrive half an hour early to sign up to ensure you get a chance to speak early in the proceedings.
 - You must usually be present to sign up to testify, but for contentious issues, there may be a long wait.
- Dress appropriately:
 - A good impression can only help your message, not detract from it. For testimony, perception of your personal appearance, preparedness, and written word makes a difference.
- Listen to other testimony:
 - Try not to repeat what a previous speaker has presented.
 - If someone covers one of your points, that is an opportunity to focus on one of your other points.
 - This is why speaking from your own experience is so effective, because your experience is likely to be somewhat different.
 - Make notes on what your opponents say at the hearing.
- It's Your Turn -- This is Your Time to Shine!:
 - **Identify yourself:**
 - Begin by giving your name. Usually you must state the city you live in.
 - It is better to testify as a private citizen.
 - If you are testifying for an organization or group, state the name, briefly describe its mission, and, if you can, state how many members it has.
 - **Include some facts:**
 - Be factual only – know both sides of the issue.
 - Offer clear statements.
 - Be passionate and sincere. It is OK to show emotion, but be rational.
 - If you have the time to back up your information with citations to reliable sources, you can help counter the perception that activists speak out on these issues based solely on emotion. This might best be done by referring to your written testimony.
 - By making your comments clear, specific and on-point, you help to ensure that decision-makers will be required to give your concerns serious consideration and, at the very least, prepare responses that speak directly to your issues.
 - It is great if you can provide copies of the sources of your facts to the decision-makers.
 - **Request action:**

- State exactly what you would like the committee or sponsor to do.
- **Offer solutions:**
 - Whether stating a specific or general approach to an issue, solutions or feasible alternatives are always well-received.
 - If you wish to convey amendments or revisions to legislation, provide your edited version of the bill.
 - Be careful not to blame anyone or make accusatory remarks.
- **Thank the committee:**
 - Close your presentation by thanking the committee or council. Even if you're upset.
- **Offer to answer any questions:**
 - Be sure to answer questions honestly.
 - If you do not know the answer, it's fine to say "I don't know but can I get back to you" or "I'd like to think about that a little more, can I get back to you?" Be sure to follow up. You just got a second chance to make your point!
 - If possible and appropriate, you may defer the question to another who may have the information.
- **Submit your testimony in written format:**
 - Be sure to submit your testimony in written format or any other information supporting your message to the committee or council.
 - Bring enough copies to distribute to all members of the Planning Commission, City Council, County Council or Commission, key staff, and the media.
 - Putting your points "in the record" can be critical if you eventually need to appeal to a higher authority to overturn an unfavorable decision.

Personal Meetings Matter: Meet Face to Face

Most decision-makers are eager to meet with their constituents. Most of the time they hear from lobbyists and special interest groups! Your opinions are valuable to them, and by meeting with them you can be very influential. Keep in mind that you don't have to be an expert to get your point across. The message you bring to a meeting is that of a concerned, voting constituent. You have a few options for personal, face-to-face meetings:

- You can schedule a meeting in your legislator's local office
- Or you can travel to Washington, D.C, or your state capital.
- You can also attend an open house, town hall, or other public meeting hosted or attended by the decision-maker(s).

Keep in mind that sometimes you won't get to meet directly with a decision-maker, but instead will see a member of his or her staff. These people are important advisors on issues and the concerns of their constituents. Meeting with a staffer can sometimes even be better than meeting with a decision-maker. They'll likely have more time to fully hear you. Whether you meet with the decision-maker or their staff-person, be prepared to answer these basic questions with conviction:

- *What is the issue?*
 - Be ready to briefly discuss the principles of the issue. Know your facts as best you can, and be prepared with anecdotal information.
 - Remember, your decision-makers and staffers learn about dozens of issues every week. It is critical that you tell a compelling story.
 - Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." It's always better to follow up with someone with the correct answer (which also provides you with another opportunity for contact) than to be inaccurate.
- *Why should I care?*
 - Clearly articulate the reasons why your decision-maker should care about your issue.
 - If possible, make the issue local—talk about how and why it's important to their district/state and their constituents. If it matters to you, it should matter to the person who represents you.
 - If you can, highlight issues that are personally important to the decision-maker. Is he or she a birder, hiker or scientist? Is there any other sort of personal connection with wildlife or the outdoors?
- *What do you want me to do about it?*
 - It is vital to be clear on what you're asking the decision-maker to do. It could be any number of things: sponsor a bill, sign a letter, speak to their colleagues or with the media about the issue, vote yes or no, etc.—but you have to remember to ask for exactly what you want.

The information provided in this resource is largely adapted from the:

Defenders of Wildlife Citizen Advocate Handbook:

<http://www.defenders.org/publications/citizen-advocate-handbook-2012.pdf>

Oregon Wild Ones Activist Toolkit and Public Testimony 101:

<http://www.oregonwild.org/about/take-action/oregon-wild-ones/wild-ones-activist-toolkit>

Center for Biological Diversity:

www.biologicaldiversity.org/westcoastwolves

Center for Biological Diversity, Defending America's West Coast Wolves

[printed material]

Defenders of Wildlife, gray wolves:

<http://www.defenders.org/gray-wolf/basic-facts>