1. WDFW scientists are fully aware that the state's bear population is capable of supporting a restricted entry spring hunt. Dr. Stephanie Simek has repeatedly stated before the Commission that this is the case.

Why, then, do a few rogue commissioners continue to deviate from the department's sound science in pursuit of an agenda that can only be driven by opponents of hunting and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation?

The end of spring bear hunting is only the tip of the iceberg. It's part of a troubling trend that some of our commissioners appear to be following, one that would abandon WDFW's mandate to manage wildlife through recreational hunting and fishing in favor of some ill-conceived preservationist pipe dream.

Please support the North American Wildlife Model by restoring spring bear hunting in Washington State.

1. Our blue mountain elk herds are in dire straits. This fact was made obvious by work done by WDFW staff biologists. While mountain lion predation seems to be the primary culprit for the Blue Mountain elk decline, their effect on herd health does not exist in a vacuum as bears are known to have their own impact on elk calf survival rates.

People at the department know that predator management is important if we want to sustain healthy ungulate herds. A key component in the department’s effort to tip the scales back in the favor of ungulate neonates in the Blue Mountains could be the re-implementation of spring bear hunting in Washington state.

What will the unyielding opponents of predator hunting have to say for themselves when the Blue Mountain elk herds have been decimated? Will they wake up to the folly of their ways or will they continue to live in the fantasy world that tells them that North America’s wildlife populations will somehow exist in perfect harmony once the hand of man is completely removed from the equation.

Science tells us that they are wrong in this Walt Disney-inspired view of nature that they so stubbornly cling to. Let’s trust the science and bring back spring bear hunting in Washington.

1. Large carnivores such as bears and cougars must be managed by the WDFW. Despite the fact that some of our elk herds are failing, the department's own data shows robust bear numbers across the state.

In the face of public criticism to any aspect of wildlife management, the agency should not back down. Wildlife management is an emotional topic by its very nature, and people who aren't well-versed in the complexities of ecosystems are likely to let their emotions guide their decisions. This is why, rather than the politically and emotionally charged whims of public opinion, we should depend on the straightforward science offered by department biologists.

Please reinstate the spring black bear hunt in Washington state and entrust the WDFW staff biologists with the work they were paid to do.

1. Like many hunters across the nation, I was shocked and dismayed when the Washington Fish and Game Commission decided to ignore the department’s scientific data on thriving black bear populations and ban our long-standing spring hunt.

It has been very frustrating to watch this tragedy unfold. As a hunter and a conservationist, I am very proud of the harvest data that I provide to the department when I take an animal. It’s icing on the cake of the numerous other resources that a harvested game animal provides. While I was encouraged by Stephanie Simek’s multiple presentations to the commission about the healthy status of black bears in the state and the success of our spring hunting season, I was equally discouraged by certain commission members’ unwillingness to even listen to what she had to say.

It is a sad and bizarre day in Washington when our own biologists are shunned by our game commission. To the general public, hunters and WDFW, please do everything you can to communicate the efficacy of a spring bear hunt to the new members of the game commission. As a lifelong hunter and a conservationist, I will be here to support you every step of the way.

1. I have listened to the black bear population analysis that Dr. Stephanie Simek so expertly provided to the commission in the lead up to its decision to ban spring bear hunting in Washington state, and I am convinced that we can sustain, and indeed we truly need, a spring black bear hunt here in Washington.

It is baffling to me that the commission was able to come to any different conclusion, but it is more easily understood when you realize that politics and emotion have been injected into what should be sound wildlife biology.

As a tax paying citizen and a lifelong hunter, I am insulted by the idea that some Commissioners are given more credence in their interpretation of wildlife science in Washington than a career veteran like Dr. Simek.

We are living in an upside down world here, and we need to right this ship. Please give the Commission the guidance it so desperately needs to make things right. All Washingtonians and the wildlife that they cherish are depending on you.

1. We know that our bear populations are thriving in Washington state. Our own scientists have assured us of this time and time again. Hunters and conservationists are very appreciative of the hard work that the WDFW staff puts in to secure these population statistics. We have faith in these numbers and the competency of the staff biologists who produce them.

That is a big part of why we pay into the system with our license dollars and a big part of why we voluntarily provide survey data that contributes to the collective knowledge of our carefully managed game species. Unfortunately, our opponents, who do not pay into the proven model of wildlife conservation that we have in this state and across this country, would like to see our contributions banished altogether.

It pains me to see our own game commission acquiescing to the demands of these people. There is a dark future at the end of the path we are headed down. There is no such thing as a utopia. Our wildlife species will not be better off once the hand of man is removed from the equation. Please bring back our spring bear season and preserve the hunting heritage that has sustained wildlife in this country for well over 100 years.

1. Wildlife science was thrown out the window when the Commission voted to end spring bear hunting in Washington. With that vote, the Commission showed that it values the special interests of people who would like to see bear hunting banned altogether over the proven data of scientists like Dr. Stephanie Simek—a career biologist who has spent her entire adult life studying bears.

There is simply no scientific justification for ending the spring bear hunt. The true motives behind this decision were politics, emotion, and a troubling appeal to public sentiment. You do not need to be a wildlife biologist in order to see where this sorry excuse for wildlife management decision making will ultimately take us.

The department must fight tooth and nail to bring back the spring hunt in Washington. As a hunter who happily pays license fees that fund the department, I can speak for numerous family members and friends when I implore you to do so. Please fight for wildlife in Washington. Bring back spring bear!