

FILM TESTIMONIAL

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At their best, universities should protect academic freedom. This is the gold standard for our institutions of higher learning. Universities, at their worst, that suppress the expression of academic research, only display a lump of coal (or better yet, manure) as their standard. I strongly believe that the latter rating can be attached to Washington State University (WSU) in its blatant threats of disciplinary action, reprimands, shuns, attacks of credibility, and restrictions on research funding directed at Dr. Robert Wielgus, Professor and head of the Large Carnivore Lab at WSU.

Dr. Wielgus has been a respected leading researcher in the field of large apex carnivore interactions with livestock. As a national expert on livestock depredation by wolves (and cougars), he publicly released research revealing that the blame of the eradication of the Profanity Peak wolf pack in Washington State lay mainly with a single rancher's failure to follow adequate animal husbandry techniques to prevent depredation of his cattle by this pack, and by refusing to cooperate with the WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), and the expertise of the Lab in implementing measures to avoid wolf/ livestock confrontations. It is only common sense that a rancher, who freely chooses to lease public grazing land that comprises densely forested, steep, and mountainous terrain, hiring only one range rider to oversee cattle on 30,000 acres, would find it impossible to adequately patrol. Furthermore, a rancher that has deliberately turned cattle out to graze near a known wolf den and has placed salt blocks as an attractant for his cattle to travel near the den, as documented by radio-telemetry and videotapes, is suspect in his motives.

When WSU and the School of Agriculture assessed that Dr. Wielgus' findings clashed with those of a segment of the public (i.e., the livestock owners / agriculture community) and politicians who are lobbied by them, and when these entities' desires were to blame the wolves and not the rancher, the motivation of the university's decision to extinguish academic expression was obvious. With its College of Agriculture, WSU's decision to side with the livestock owner community, politicians, and state predator control networks only delivered a slap in the face to the researchers' and teachers' entitlement to full freedom in the publication of their results.

Having viewed a video of Dr. Wielgus' conference talk with the Wolf Advisory Group and WDFW about his wolf research describing how to mitigate wolf/livestock depredation and how depredation of livestock actually increased the next year following deliberate killing of wolves, and reviewed numerous articles and publications by Dr. Wielgus, and viewed the recent documentary film titled "The Profanity Pack: Set Up and Sold Out," I have come to the conclusion, that as a graduate of WSU School of Veterinary Medicine and an alumnus, I am disgusted, appalled, and ashamed that academic expression has been suppressed and politicized. This is a perverse and corrupt stance by a university and is highly disturbing. The integrity of scientific research is being threatened.

The Profanity Peak wolf pack slaughter is egregious enough, but now another slaughter has taken place. This is imbued by suppression of research results that happen to challenge livestock owners' and corporations' control of our natural resources (i.e. wildlife). In my opinion this is immoral and unethical. WSU has lost my respect and support.

Albert Einstein stated it best when he was quoted saying "Those who have the privilege to know, have the duty to act, and in that action are the seeds of new knowledge." Let us hope that our universities are listening.

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Watch this provocative film about Washington State's unjust, unnecessary, and ongoing wolf slaughter at www.predatordefense.org/profanity.