

Wildlife Program

Week of July 28 – August 3, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Fishers: As part of the ongoing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and the development of the environmental assessment associated with the Cascades fisher reintroduction, Biologist Jeff Lewis reviewed and revised a first complete draft of the environmental assessment, as well as the associated biological assessment for the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Lewis also reviewed comments and revised an outline for the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances that we will submit to the USFWS in the event that the fisher is proposed for listing in Washington under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Sage-grouse Candidate Conservation Agreement Formation: Section Managers Becker and Wilkerson met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Lands Division staff to discuss composing the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Sage Grouse. We hope to include both the state and private landowners in the agreements.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Recruitment Completed to Expand Citizen Science Capacity: Recruitment has been completed for the Community Outreach and Environmental Education Specialist 4 position that was re-described when Chuck Gibilisco retired in January 2014. Wendy Connally, currently employed in Austin, Texas was selected for the position. During 2 rounds of interview, Ms. Connally stood out based on applicable experience, pertinent education, extent of professional engagement in wildlife outreach, and direct familiarity with working in wildlife diversity programs in a state wildlife agency. Ms. Connally holds a B.S. degree from Texas A&M University in Wildlife & Fisheries Science and has 27 years of progressively responsible experience in public interaction, wildlife diversity, project management, volunteer coordination, resource conservation, partnership development, and data management with multiple state and federal resource agencies. These agencies include The Nature Conservancy, a consulting firm, a water management agency, and county government. Wendy's primary responsibilities in this position will be to develop citizen science endeavors to assist collection of species and ecosystem status information. She also will play a key role in facilitating outreach and education endeavors to build public awareness of Diversity Division and Wildlife Program conservation objectives. Ms. Connally will begin work at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on September 22, 2014.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management



Grouse Tracking at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: Biologist Lowe radio-tracked sharp-tailed and sage grouse in the Swanson Lakes area with Dr. Kim Thorburn and Technician Lester. One radio was retrieved from a sharp-tailed male mortality, most radioed birds were located, and a group of sage grouse was seen crossing the road (see photo).

Radio-collared sage grouse. Photo by K. Thorburn

Blue Mountains Game Surveys: District Wildlife Biologist Wik conducted 3 deer/elk surveys during the week. The data has not been compiled yet, but approximately 240 elk were classified, as well as hundreds of deer. Numerous adult bucks were observed, indicating a productive hunting season should be forecast for District 3. Also, numerous chukar and Hungarian partridge broods were observed, all with more than 10 chicks per hen.



Mule deer buck observed in an unharvested canola field while conducting game surveys.

Wildlife Areas

WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Large Wood Projects. In-stream river work on the Tucannon River continued for Large Wood projects in Project Area (PA) 14. Materials continued to be stockpiled for PA 15 and in-stream work will begin next week. Asst. Wildlife Area Manager Dingman flagged out an area for spoils to be deposited in PA 15.



Structure in PA 14 near Tucannon Hatchery.

Large Wood structure in PA 14 near Campground 2.



GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Private Lands/Access



Hunting Access Posting on Snake

River: Biologist Lewis and Technician Clements worked with Officer King to post Hunting by Reservation Only properties that have boundaries on the Snake River. River side boundaries were accessed from one of WDFW's enforcement boats. The landowners expressed concern and an ongoing problem with hunters illegally accessing the property from the river.

View of the hunting property

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Ruby Creek Pack Female: Specialist Shepherd spent multiple days and evenings in the Tiger area south of Ione attempting to haze the Ruby Creek wolf and discussing the issue with residents. This animal moves back and forth between private property and the Colville National Forest.

Successful Whitman County Kill Permit Hunt: Conflict Specialist Bennett received a text message and photo from a current Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) Landowner that had recently received a Kill and several Damage Permits. The text message included a very happy landowner and a youth hunter that had harvested a doe last week utilizing the kill permit.



Successful youth hunter on a damage hunt near Colfax, Washington

Wildlife Management

National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee Meeting: Supervisor McCanna had another conference call this week to work to finalize meeting preparations. McCanna continues to contact each of the thirty nine states and the Government of Saskatchewan to compile contact information, and to determine if they will be participating in the September meeting. The goal of the first national meeting being on the west coast is to get other west coast states to participate in the meetings. So far, Oregon and Utah will be attending the meeting. The other state in the plan under region one is Idaho.



Hazing Cows and calves in Standing Wheat

Elk Damage to Garbanzo Bean, Peas and Wheat Crops: Conflict Specialist Rasley and Conflict Specialist Bennett were able to cover most of the high priority damage crops in Walla Walla & Columbia County. At 5 a.m. it was 80 degrees.

Wildlife Areas

Cross Country Team visits Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (WLA): Staff encountered a group of runners on Sherman Creek WLA, along the Trout Lake Road, that turned out to be the Cross Country running team from North Central High School in Spokane. The team has been coming up to this area for the past 16 years for their summer training camp, running in different areas nearby. Besides Trout Lake Road, they also run on the South Fork Sherman Creek Road, and the Locust Grove Trail located across Lake Roosevelt from Sherman Creek WLA on National Park Service land. This was the first time that staff had met these folks. Natural Resource Technician Jerry “Chris” Christensen told the team about the trail system on the wildlife area and provided them with maps of its route. They were previously unaware of the trail, but interested in seeing what the 5+ mile system had to offer.



Members of the North Central High School Cross Country Team at the end of a run on Monday morning along the Trout Lake Road on Sherman Creek WLA.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Boundary stock fence project: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice and Biologist David Woodall spent Monday and Tuesday inspecting the recently completed Chief Joseph boundary fence. The fence was erected by a Contractor and CAMP was not able to send an inspector over for a final inspection. Inspecting the fence in 100 degree weather was not an easy task given the extreme terrain where this fence is located. Only one deficiency was found in the fence. An eyebolt had pulled away from its anchoring point in a rock. Overall, this is an extremely well built and strong fence. It is entirely made of steel and will never burn. The corner posts are all cemented in and in most cases, the posts holes had to be drilled in solid rock. Many of the t-posts also had to be drilled in. All of the old wire and steel from the previous fence has been picked up and hauled away. Much if it had to be flown off the Mountain with a helicopter. Our problems with trespass livestock on this part of the wildlife area should be greatly minimized with completion of the fence.



Photos from the Boundary stock fence project.

REGION 2

NO REPORT THIS WEEK

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area---
Manager Greg Bjornstrom**

Assistant Manager Buser worked with LKE Enterprises and Ducks Unlimited engineers to finish the West Pigeon Pond renovation project at Mesa Lake.

*Wrapping up construction on
the dike repair at Mesa Lake*



Wildlife Management

**District 4 Private Lands
Biologist --- Ryan Stutzman**

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman baited the duck traps at Mesa and Bailey WMA's three times this week. The previous day's bait was gone each time and good numbers of ducks are using the sites. Trapping will begin next week.

District 8 Wildlife Biologist—Jeff Bernatowicz.

Turkeys: Biologist Bernatowicz corresponded with Captain Mann regarding some pen raised Rio Grande Turkeys that are loose in Selah. The Yakama Nation has turkey traps and will loan if needed.



Mt. Goats Survey: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Biologists Moore and Anderson to set up ground survey routes between I-90 and Highway 2.

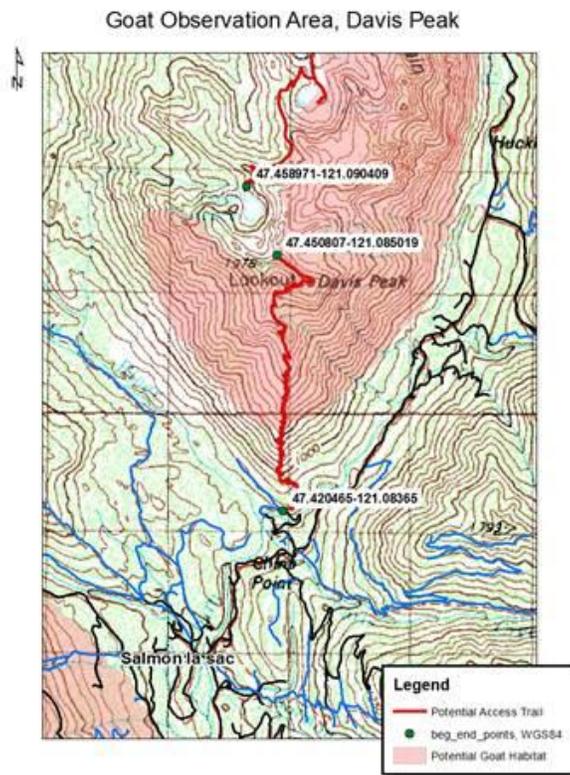
A landowner in the Teanaway called Officer Peterson to report a wolf in her horse pasture. No negative interactions were observed and no known livestock issues have occurred. Officer Peterson discussed wolf

issues with the landowner and Biologist Becker was notified. Biologist Becker confirmed that this individual was the collared male from the Teaway Pack. Specialist Wetzel called the landowner to update them with information.

District 8 Assistant District Wildlife Biologist---William Moore

Mt. Goats: Biologist Moore began creating route and area description maps for an upcoming ground Mt. Goat survey that will be performed by Washington's Chapter of Mt. Goat Alliance. Moore used historic, recent interview, and modeling data to identify high density goat areas from I90 to Highway 2 on the eastern slopes of the Cascades, then determined the best potential access. The map products will be part of a packet of information to assist the volunteers.

Example Access Map:



Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Moore checked the recently collared bulls and all seem to be doing well.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area---Manager Ross Huffman

Manager Huffman delivered fishing regulations to several local businesses that were in low supply. For some reason the wildlife area received 4 large boxes of the regulations this year. Most years we get ½ box shipped and do not pass all of those out. All of the businesses were appreciative of the regulations and now they are not taking up space in the office.

NRW 2 Smith picked up trash at all of the swimming holes on the wildlife area. The areas are getting plenty of use with the hot weather. Smith also cleaned up a swimming hole at horseshoe bend on private property. That area was full of used diapers and lots of other trash. Manager Huffman contacted the landowner who is aware of the use and appreciated us picking up the trash. They do not see the point in posting the area as the signs will not last long enough to be worth the time. In addition, they reported target shooting and campfires had been going on in the area. Enforcement was notified of the issues.

Wenas Wildlife Area---Manager Cindi Confer

Manager Confer Morris contacted a family at Hessler Flats that was teaching their young daughter to shoot. They were aware of the timing restriction, but hadn't realized that we had gone to a full closure on target shooting on the wildlife area. They were given a verbal warning and informed that the new kiosks were a good place to check on the current rules.

District 8 Wildlife Biologist—Jeff Bernatowicz.

Three-Year Package: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed regional proposals with Biologist Moore, who filled in during the eastside meetings.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area---Manager Shana Winegeart

Manager Winegeart attended a Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) meeting. MDF is working with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to develop conservation projects in the Ellensburg area. Projects will range in size from small, 1-day work parties up to large-scale studies across the region.

Wildlife Management

District 4 Conflict Specialist—Don Hand

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to monitor and patrol Fewel Farms for elk damage concerns. After over a week reprieve, a group of 30+ elk returned late last week to raid their apple orchard and corn fields. Two elk were harvested and the rest were hazed from the area.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent time coordinating with Master Hunters from the Rattlesnake Hills permit list on elk locations for potential harvest. One cow elk was reported harvested by a Master Hunter.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a deer damage complaint from Gilbert Orchards in southern Benton County. Multiple non-lethal strategies have been employed and damage continues to a new planting of apple trees. Two DPP permits will be issued this coming week to address the problem.

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist---Steve Wetzel

Ellensburg Area: Landowners from many parts of the Kittitas Valley called to report elk in irrigated areas. Apparently dry conditions have caused the elk to move to moist fields to feed and bed. Hazing and landowner damage permits will be used to move elk away from these areas.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area---Manager Ross Huffman

Manager Huffman completed the Position Description for the new Oak Creek Forester and submitted to AD Pamplin with an HR Action Form.

Manager Huffman continued working on the management plan update. In addition Huffman sent an email out to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area Advisory Committee with possible meeting dates.



Wenas Wildlife Area---Manager Cindi Confer

Engineering staff completed re-decking the Mellotte Bridge.

New decking on Mellotte Bridge

Access Program

NRW2 Barbosa serviced Ringold, Duportail, Snively, and Hyde Road; Buena, Zillah Bridge, and Pond 4 and 5; Oak Creek and Tim's Pond; Teanaway, Lavender Lake, King Horn Slough, Mattoon Lake, Mile Post 8 & 10. He also mowed Buena Wednesday morning and painted the entrance sign at Mile Post 8 in the afternoon. When NRW2 Barbosa was at Tim's Pond Thursday

morning, he discovered a large black safe and two empty cash bags. He notified Captain Mann, took photos of the items, and brought them back to the Region 3 Office. He then took the items down to the Yakima County Sheriff's Office at Captain Mann's request. On Friday he installed two bug screens, serviced the remaining lower valley sites, and restocked both service trucks.



Mile post 8 Entrance Sign - before and after painting



Tim's Pond – cash bags and safe discovered at the site

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

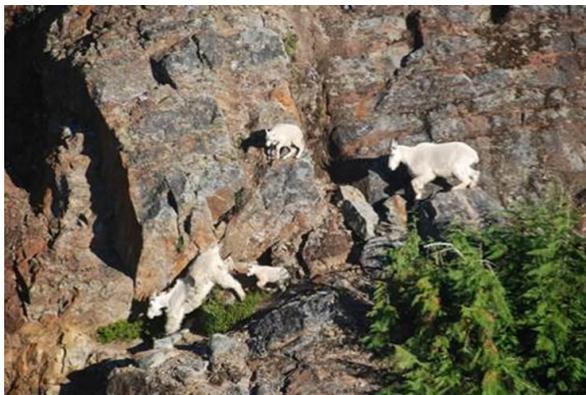
Mountain Goat Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra performed aerial mountain goat surveys in the northern Cascades this week. District Biologist Milner, Section Manager Harris, and tribal cooperator biologists all assisted with observations on various segments of the flights. Over 1000 nautical miles of survey routes were flown through 32 survey blocks in the Mt Baker and Darrington areas. In addition, nearly 300 miles were flown in 8 areas east and south of the Mountain Loop Highway to survey areas that have not been flown recently. The

total number of goats observed, as well as specific block numbers, still remains to be analyzed. Thanks goes to our tribal funding cooperators, and especially to Jess Hagarman of Northwest Helicopters for safely and professionally piloting us through the most rugged (and spectacular) terrain in Washington.



District Biologist Milner observing Mountain Goat Nanny and Kid in the North Central Cascades

Mountain Goat group on the flanks of Mt Baker



Mountain Goat group moving with agility on a near vertical cliff face

District 8 and 12 Mountain Goat efforts:

Biologist Anderson corresponded with District 5 Biologist Bernatowicz regarding a volunteer ground survey effort for Mountain Goat presence across the

two districts. Anderson provided information on preferred areas to do ground survey in District 12. These are either areas where goats have been reported, or areas that offer easier ground access to provide for ground scoping of local landscape to examine if goats are present.

Bald Eagle Needs: With eagles fledging this month, District 12 has received a “ramp up” in reports of new nests requiring follow-up for confirmation, as well as calls for advice of “what to do” with the early fledged eagles running around on the ground. As usual during this time of year we are receiving calls on disturbance to eagles from holiday and various area summer events as well as territorial interactions with non-territorial eagles resulting often in an injured bird with public seeking advice of what to do.

Amphibian Monitoring Efforts – Woodland Park Zoo: Biologist Anderson continues to work with volunteers and zoo staff to provide data compilation assistance and ramp down field efforts.

Citizen Science Bat Survey: Biologist Anderson sent out project information and scheduling to volunteers in preparation for the acoustic bat encounter surveys at Stillwater, Cherry, and Crescent Lake wildlife management units this August.

Biologist Anderson found this bear swimming in the lake while he was checking on a Common Loon territory

Waterfowl Trapping: Biologist DeBruyn began preparing for waterfowl trapping by checking out and baiting a few potential sites. Contact was made with some landowners to secure access permission. Yearly mallard banding is done in cooperation with western flyway managers to assess survival and recruitment of local ducks.



Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents of King, Skagit, and Island counties. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, ornamentals, and infrastructure (fences). Agreements were discussed, some signed, and in some instances permits were issued. Smith also monitored elk/deer activity on other area agricultural fields with the help of deployed trail cameras. Smith also arranged for secure access to tools (bangers, launchers) for volunteers involved in hazing elk from agricultural fields in South King county, and for weed-eating to occur on an area protected by electric fencing.

Tech Cogdal continued hazing elk from a potato field in the Day Creek area. He also monitored elk herds in other parts of the Skagit Valley. Cogdal also communicated with landowners with fencing projects and facilitated them moving forward.

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson provided permits and management consultation assistance regarding projects requiring wildlife consideration (often osprey, herons, and peregrine falcons). Some were private and some were municipal requests for needed permits from WDFW or general management suggestions per Growth Management Act.

Biologist Anderson worked with Habitat staff to provide guidance and suggestions regarding wildlife consideration in Shoreline. The city of Shoreline is examining wetland alteration and enhancements to Hidden Lake, and is in Hydraulic Permitting consultation with Habitat staff.

Wildlife Areas

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated three volunteers, a donated tractor, and operator for a mass assault on the fields and trails that required mowing. All access roads, trailheads, and a large portion of the fields were mowed, brushcut, and

cleared of wind-fallen trees in preparation for hunting season. Manager Boehm also reports that the fields of corn and barley are coming along nicely.

Cherry Valley Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Bob Dahlheim, President of the NW retriever Club, to prepare the Unit for the Club's annual field trials event. The Club provided the rental tractor that was used to mow much of the Unit.



Skagit Wildlife Area Agricultural enhancement program:

Island Unit: Natural Resources Tech Cosgrove monitored field drainage conditions and agricultural enhancements on the Island Unit.

Island Unit barley and corn plantings.

Lake Terrell Dam Blockages: Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleared out a beaver made blockage at the Lake Terrell dam. This blockage prevented water flow into Terrell Creek that helps salmon survive downstream. Manager Kessler coordinated with Whatcom County Conservation District managers on the status of the water releases in the creek.

Rainbow Pond Water Control: Natural Resource Tech Deyo blocked the beaver deceiver pipe on the water control to start saving water in Rainbow Pond. Due to permitting issues, the Rainbow Pond water control replacement may not occur until next year.

Fir Island Farm Construction Management Coordination: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Brian Williams, Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard, and staff from the The Nature Conservancy met to coordinate and discuss strategies, framework, roles, and responsibilities to consider planning construction management at the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration site. Because of the large scale of this upcoming project, a team of individuals with diverse skill sets will be required to assure the project is constructed as designed. Construction is planned to begin during the summer of 2015.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Theresa Mitchell met with Skagit and Whatcom County Habitat, Wildlife, and Fish Program WDFW staff to provide an update and discuss an upcoming need for community outreach regarding PSNERP. More information on PSNERP is available at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design: Projects Coordinator Brokaw received an update on the status of the modeling work currently underway on the six design alternatives for Leque Island. The modeling company is making progress, but does not currently have results prepared that are ready to be shared. Preliminary results are anticipated to be completed at the

end of August. For more information on design alternatives, visit the project webpage at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Sky Valley Recreation Coalition Meeting: Biologist Milner attended the regular meeting of the Sky Valley Recreation coalition. This group meets every two months to discuss progress and issues related to outdoors recreation of all kinds in the Skykomish Corridor. Members are staff from federal, state, and local agencies, city managers, commercial business leaders, and all other interested parties. Milner has not been able to attend regularly due to schedule conflicts so it was good to get back in touch with the group. There is keen interest in keeping the Sky Valley as a clean and safe place for outdoor recreation. Coordinator Dazey spoke to the group about both the need to expand hunter education access and increase the number of instructors so as to meet the growing need for classes. Coordinator Dazey also spoke about the volunteer opportunities for citizen volunteers to assist the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and how these projects can help enhance the environment and thereby improve the recreational draw and ultimately improve the economic impact to the area.

Ongoing Cougar Population Landscape Factors and Population Dynamics Study: Regional Manager Link, along with Biologists Anderson and Smith, conferenced with Carnivore Research Scientist Kertson, as well as members of the Science and Game divisions in regards to an annual status report and the next steps for this project.

2015-17 Hunting Season Development – Response to Public Comments: Biologists provided response to public comments regarding the 2015-17 Hunting Season Development comment period.

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Hunting Blinds

Maintenance: Natural Resource Tech Deyo finished repairs of waterfowl hunting blinds on the Lake Terrell Unit, including the ADA Accessible blind. Manager Kessler coordinated with ADA Access Program Manager Delores Noyes on the exact dimensions to make the blind completely wheel chair accessible. All but two of the hunting blinds at Lake Terrell and Intalco have now been repaired and brushed up for the upcoming Hunting season.



Waterfowl hunting blind on the Lake Terrell Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area



Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleared a county road right of way to gain access to an 80 acre property near Lynden. This property has been basically land locked with no usable access to it.

Samish Unit Wetland

Enhancement Project: The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) permit application and supporting

materials for the project were submitted to the WDFW SEPA Coordinator. A draft determination will be made and available for comment in the near future, probably this week. Ducks Unlimited and Project Coordinator Brokaw completed a cover letter to submit to the Army Corps of Engineers with the JARPA permit package.

Hunter Education Coordination: Steven Dazey, along with volunteers Rick Webber and Brian Demorest, conducted a traditional hunter education course at the Cultural Center on the Upper Skagit reservation. Also assisting was Brandon Farstad, who was completing his certification as a hunter education instructor. Both Brian and Brandon work as enforcement officers for the Upper Skagit. The class was arranged and the logistical support provided by Scott Schuyler, Policy Representative of the Upper Skagit Tribe. All eight students who completed the two day class passed the test and are going to receive their hunter education certification. In addition, it is planned to request of the tribal council to use the cultural facility and to use the newly certified instructors from the tribe to conduct more classes this fall. One of the students, 28 year old Alex B., also applied to become a Washington state volunteer hunter education instructor so that he can assist with classes on the Upper Skagit. Alex received a 100% score on his exam and participated and helped the younger students throughout the weekend to understand the material



Instructors and students at the Upper Skagit Cultural Center with Volunteer Rick Webber presenting.

presented. He will make an excellent addition to our instructor team. This was also the first time the Region 4 Orange Hunter Education mobile classroom trailer was used to conduct a remote class. The trailer comes equipped with all the supplies to conduct a field course at a remote sight.



Instructor team with Scott Schuyler and new HE equip trailer. Lots of smiles from a successful group of students.

Private Lands/Access Management

Herbicide Spraying: Technician Otto completed herbicide spraying, covering 3 acres of reed canary grass on a Skagit County waterfowl quality hunt unit. Otto completed a post barley emergent spraying of broadleaf weeds that out-competes barley. This 25 acre site was also a waterfowl quality hunt unit that is located in Whatcom County.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Hunter Education Coordination: Steven Dazey held the classroom portion of the Pre-Service



Hunter Education Instructor applicants attending a PST classroom session at the Nile Shrine Center.

training (PST) at the Nile Shrine Center. Use of the room was donated by the Nile, and Coordinator Dazey was able to start 8 instructor applicants on the path to become certified. The eight applicants will finish the certification by conducting and teaching a class of actual students in the near future. The PST at the Nile is part of an effort by Coordinator Dazey to clear a backlog of applicants and to strengthen the volunteer team in Region 4.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey met with an inactive team member from the Oak Harbor area team who had not instructed a class since 2012. This was the only team teaching in the Oak Harbor area, so students from the north end of Whidbey Island have had to travel elsewhere to take the hunter education class. After meeting with the team member and receiving commitments of support from several other instructors from that team, it appears that we will restart the North Whidbey team. The original Chief Instructor had decided in 2012 to move on after many years as an instructor and the team had drifted apart without a Chief Instructor. Dazey showed the team member how easy it is to post classes on Kalkomey and also the PowerPoint support material for the On-Line Field Skills Evaluation. With assistance from Coordinator Dazey for the first class, we will have a team teaching in Oak Harbor again.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended the first session of a hunter education class at the Central Whidbey Sportsman Club. Coordinator Dazey evaluated the level of instruction being provided by instructors Sam Weatherford and John Boling and found that they were doing a good job. Coordinator Dazey also was able to preview some teaching aids and visual materials that the team used and plans on suggesting the material to other teams. It is always great to visit the Region 4 teams and see the good instruction being provided by our volunteers.



Volunteer instructors Sam Weatherford and John Boling teaching at the Central Whidbey Sportsman club.

Small mammal Conflicts: Biologist Anderson worked with Habitat Staff and Seattle Parks and Recreation to examine ongoing concern over beaver management at Golden Gardens. Anderson provided biological input and beaver use history. Seattle and Habitat are continuing discussions to bring all up to speed on any of the ground management needs in working with Habitat.

Biologist DeBruyn responded to a call from a woman with river otters nesting under her house. He referred her to “Living with Wildlife” and she agreed to close up the hole after they vacated the crawl space.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm posted new “Dog Training Area” signs and a reference map detailing the location of official dog training locations at Cherry Valley and Crescent Lake Wildlife Units.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Specialist Meis mowed the pheasant pens at the Headquarters.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton met with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dike District 5, and Skagit County Public Works to discuss the temporary access and repair project on the flood gates on the Samish River.

Staff cut and sprayed purple loosestrife on this property to keep it from going to seed. Manager Rotton met with neighboring property owners to discuss the installation of a fence and gate along the dike at Samish River. This is an effort to decrease the trespass on the neighbors during the fishing season.

Fir Island Farms, Jensen Access, and Skagit Headquarters Units: Staff mowed and treated parking areas for weeds, specifically thistle, blackberry, and mustard.

Island Unit: Staff met with stakeholders about the ditch maintenance project on the Island Unit. Manager Rotton contacted Department of Ecology to update them on the status of the project.

GOAL 4: SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Management

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters to provide volunteer opportunities for them. With support from Steve Dazey, the WDFW Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator, one Master Hunter and two additional volunteers continue to remove fallen trees, conduct trail maintenance, and tend to nursery needs over the past week.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle Survey Data Summary: Biologist Anderson worked on summarizing this season's golden eagle survey data as part of the state-wide breeding season monitoring effort. Information was collected on occupancy and productivity for 10 sites located in Klickitat County. Preliminary results indicate that only three sites were occupied and only two out of the 10 territories monitored were successful at producing young.

Western Pond Turtle Management -- Skamania Forest Youth Success (FYS) pond turtle habitat enhancements: Biologist George oversaw a week of work on habitat enhancement tasks at the Bergen western pond turtle site. The work was performed by a seven-member crew from the Skamania Forest Youth Success Program (FYS). During the week, the crew removed invasive scotch broom from several hillsides in the vicinity of Dead Tree Pond. While taking a break from the hard work of hand pulling plants, the crew constructed and installed turtle basking structures. Removing the scotch broom will help to keep the hillsides open and sunny, which is the preferred habitat for nesting pond turtles.

FYS employs high-school students during the summer to conduct natural resources related work at a variety of locations throughout the county. This is the fifth year that WDFW has teamed with FYS to conduct habitat work at Bergen. FYS crews work closely with natural resource professionals during their week-long assignments to learn about many aspects of the work related to each project. Thanks to all the crew members for this year's hard work.



Skamania Forest Youth Success (FYS) pond turtle habitat enhancements.

Western Pond Turtle Management -- Annual Release of western pond turtles at Bergen western pond turtle site: Biologist George facilitated the release of 6 western pond turtles to the Bergen Road western pond turtle site. The event was scaled back this year, but was attended by participants from the Oregon Zoo, Skamania Forest Youth Success Program, Oregon Zoo Volunteers, and interested individuals. Biologist George gave a "turtle talk" describing the history of western pond turtle management in the Columbia River Gorge, turtle biology, etc. Biologist Dobson from the U.S. Forest Service also gave a talk describing the fascinating geological features and the interesting history of the Bergen Site. The 6 turtles from this event, the 15th year of releases, will mix with introduced and naturally occurring pond turtles at the

site. Thanks to the Oregon Zoo and U.S. Forest Service for their on-going commitment to western pond turtle management in the Columbia River Gorge.



Annual release of western pond turtles.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

Wildlife Management

2015-17 Three-Year Season Setting Process: Regional Managers, Wildlife Biologists, and Conflict Specialists met with Game Division Staff to discuss details regarding proposals to be brought forward in the 3-year season setting effort. Within Region 5, possible changes to deer hunting in GMU 382 (East Klickitat), elk hunting in GMU 524 (Margaret), and hunting related tools to address damage caused by elk and deer in various parts of Region 5 were all discussed as proposals. Public scoping, including internet surveys, informational websites, and public meetings, will all be employed in the continuation of the development of the hunting season proposals. Interested parties should continue to watch the Hunting page of WDFW's website for developments and opportunities to comment on the 2015-17 seasons.

Annual Region 5 Mountain Goat PR Report: Biologist Holman completed the annual Pittman-Robertson (PR) report for mountain goat management in Region 5. The report summarizes activities related to mountain goats undertaken in the past year. This includes population estimates for Region 5 goats, hunting season structure, harvest, etc. The report will be compiled with similar documents on all hunted species in Washington and finalized this fall. Interested parties can read the annual reports from past years by visiting the Hunting page of WDFW's website and selecting Game Status and Trend Reports.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Wildlife Conflict

Coyote: Conflict Specialist Conklin was contacted by Bob Oke Game Farm in Centralia regarding a coyote that had chewed its way into the fence to access the farm. The farm has asked for advice on how to deter coyotes in the future. Conklin will meet with the farm next week and provide assistance.

Elk Damage: Conflict Specialist Conklin was contacted by a land owner in the Toledo area requesting a permit for elk damage on hay fields. Conklin scheduled a meeting with them to verify damage and begin working with them on deterring elk. In addition, Conklin has been communicating with the volunteer elk herder/hazers who are herding elk off two different pea crops. One of the fields has been harvested and it appears little damage was incurred due in part to the extra efforts of the Critter Gitters and volunteers.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Study:

Pysht Deer Cluster: Six does, four 2014 fawns, one yearling from 2013, and one yearling from 2012 continue to be monitored in the Pysht cluster. A signal from a fifth 2014 fawn has not been heard since June 30th, and efforts continue to attempt to determine where that collar might be. No known mortalities the weeks of July 20-26 or July 27th- Aug 2nd.

Satsop/Mason Deer Cluster: The Mason cluster has 7 does and 1 yearling on air, while the Satsop cluster has 2 does and 2 yearlings still transmitting. An objective of this project is to collar fawns associated with the radio-collared does. Fifteen fawns were collared this season and two fawns were found dead prior to capture. Biologist Murphie reports that 5 mortalities and 2 slipped collars have occurred so far this year; 2 from apparent coyote predation, 1 from apparent cougar, 1 from apparent bear predation, and 1 fawn from non-predation natural causes based on evidence found on scene. The slipped collars were due to a flawed collar design causing them to loosen too early.

Biologist Murphie reports that a doe mortality occurred this week, likely cougar predation based on evidence at the scene. Two fawns, orphaned by cougar predation of their mothers, remain alive. One for roughly 4 weeks and the other for 1 week, since predation of their mothers occurred. Other separation events were investigated this week, but all turned out to be false mortalities.

Mourning Dove Trapping and Banding: Biologist Michaelis began to capture and band mourning doves in two locations in Grays Harbor County. In Satsop, at the residence of Officer Harry Cilk he captured 38 doves (28 Hatch year and 6 adults). At Oakville he captured four doves. These are the only locations where Doves are captured in western Washington and data from banded doves are used to estimate survival, harvest rates, and migration distances of doves.

Oregon Spotted Frog: District 11 staff assisted with radio telemetry monitoring of state endangered Oregon spotted frogs in Thurston County. Eight adult female frogs are currently on the air. Biologists are monitoring the frogs' movements and habitat use weekly from breeding season through to summer low water. Oregon spotted frogs are highly aquatic and remain in or near water their entire lives.

Oregon Spotted Frog Habitat Enhancement – Thurston County: Biologist Tirhi and volunteer Chris Holcomb spent several hours re-recording half of the plot corners for enhancement plots associated with the Salmon Creek oviposition site. The team used a Trimble unit for accuracy this time since the initial readings (using Garmin GPS) showed enough accuracy error to cause issues. Reed canary grass will be cut to ground level within each of the randomized plots (of varying dimensions and size). Spotted frog use of the plots for ovipositioning will then be monitored next spring.

Western Pond Turtles: WDFW biologists from Districts 11 and 15 processed 133 baby western pond turtles at Woodland Park Zoo prior to release. Turtles are weighed, measured, and each receives a unique combination of marginal notches that, when added together, identify the assigned WDFW number. These youngsters hatched in 2013 and were head-started at Woodland Park Zoo since last fall. Head starting allows turtles to grow in a safe environment to a size large enough that bullfrogs (a main predator) cannot fit them in their mouths. These babies will join approximately 150 other western pond turtles at a protected recovery site.

Western Toads: Of special interest were the many thousands of juvenile western toads observed on and adjacent to a logging road near the Wynoochee River. This is the first time Biologist Michaelis has observed western toads in District 17.

Wildlife Areas

Olympic staff completed the mowing portion of the Wynoochee Mitigation forage areas this week. Lime was spread on roughly 50 acres, known as Unit 2, that are now being cultivated one final time before planting of orchard grass and red clover starts this month.



Final disking in Unit 2 after lime was spread and mowing in Unit 1.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Injured Deer: Biologist McMillan received a request from Sargent Anderson to assist with a reported fawn tangled in a fence east of Port Angeles, not far from McMillan's office. Biologist McMillan assisted the reporting party, untangling the fawn and releasing it promptly to the attentive mother doe. The fawn walked back to greet the doe but was exhausted and found a place to rest while the doe kept watch.

Wolves: Biologist Tirhi presented on the return of wolves to Washington at the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge summer lecture series. The presentation to some 80 people was standing room only on an 80 degree day, showing the local interest in the return of wolves. Tirhi presented on all aspects of wolves, including identification, biology, current status of packs, and long-term management (e.g. the state Wolf Management Plan). Manager Martorello, traveling from headquarters, assisted with answering questions regarding research and monitoring in eastern Washington and policy level questions. Tirhi has heard from the audience that the presentation was very well received and appreciated. This is the first of many presentations on wolves Tirhi is expecting to give over the coming years to various interest groups within District 11.

Chehalis Land Trust: Biologist Michaelis spoke with a group of 35 people regarding wildlife issues in the local area. Specifically, a summary of dove trapping, fisher monitoring, and other projects District 17 staff are working on. Concern was expressed regarding the elk hoof disease.

Great Blue Heron and site development, West Bay, Olympia: Biologist Tirhi met with the City of Olympia, developer Glenn Wells, and his biological consultant to discuss mitigating impacts to the West Bay Heron Colony from a Townhouse project being developed by Wells. This development has become very controversial for the surrounding community in regards to the impacts to the heron colony. Tirhi advised on the project several years ago when first permitted. However, considering the city does not require mitigation for non-endangered/threatened species little could be done. The neighbors have now come out in force through public meetings and written correspondence. Tirhi is providing biological mitigation options to reduce impacts to the heron colony; however, these are voluntary and may or may not be implemented.

Wildlife Areas

Olympic staff completed the mowing portion of the Wynoochee Mitigation forage areas this week. Lime was spread on roughly 50 acres, known as Unit 2, that are now being cultivated one final time before planting of orchard grass and red clover starts this month.



Unit 4 after being mowed and allowed time to green up.

Private Lands /Conflict

Contacts in E. Region 6 by Conflict Specialist Novak:

- *Mason County* – Contact with Skokomish area farmer with elk in field.
- *Thurston County* –
 - Verified bear damage sites on Hama Hama company land.
 - DPCA signed with Yelm area ranch. 2 antlerless elk and one antlerless deer permit issued.
 - One antlerless elk permit issued to landowner on south side of JBLM.
 - Contact with Rainier area nursery manager with questions about removing deer that are damaging the plants.
 - Contact with Tenino area farmer with potential Master Hunter project.
- *Pierce County* – Extensive contact with various Buckley area farmers. All are happy to hear about the proposed changes to area 6013 and 652 harvest.
 - Visited pumpkin farm to assess turbofladry fencing. Elk have not damaged the pumpkin crop at all, nor entered into the protected area. One pumpkin farmer reports having significant damage this season during all previous years and is very happy with the results thus far.
 - Visited corn grower along Hwy. 410. Provided advice and information on how the operator could receive permits. An electric fence had previously been installed but was neglected due to ineffectiveness. With some minor improvements, the old fence should function well to keep elk out.
- *Lewis County* – Contact with Bear Depredation permittee.
- *Kitsap County* – Visited small organic farm to assess deer-proof fence construction and retrieve loaned fence stretching device. Farm is fully fenced and zero deer have intruded since the installation. Farmer is happy with the assistance provided by Master Hunters.
- *Clallam County* – Contact with Master Hunter assistant to discuss upcoming season. Sent info on the Region 6 hunt coordinator guidelines.
 - Contact with Master Hunters authorizing harvest in the Dungeness herd.
 - Arranged meeting with district bios and enforcement to discuss upcoming damage season and 3 year package details.
 - Contact with Joyce area orchardist regarding deer damage.
 - Further discussions with landowner regarding DPCA and private lands access. Landowner wants to pursue the DPCA, but chooses not to sign a private lands access agreement this year.



Pierce County – Pumpkin Farm in May. Turbofladry freshly installed.

Pierce County – Pumpkin Farm in late July. Zero elk damage, compared to significant damage in previous years.



Kitsap County - Peace on Earth Farms, Deer-Proof Fence – Construction Aided by Region 6 Master Hunters and the Wildlife Conflict Specialist.

Contacts in W. Region 6 by Biologist Harris:

Biologist Harris continues to work with Cranberry growers in Long beach and Grayland. Currently 15 DPCAs are in process. Calls continue to come in and he expects approximately 20 more growers to contact him in the near future. The primary problem with cranberries at this time is deer. However, elk are beginning to make their presence felt. In long beach a small bachelor group likes to make occasional visits to a new planting. When in the area, they tend to follow the dikes, but this one new planting seems to attract them. There is no forage, so best guess is they like to stand in the sand. In Grayland there is a small bunch of bulls that have taken up residence in the dunes. Occasionally one or two of them like go on a walk through the bogs. Landowners are not impressed with this. In Grayland they do not have the same dike systems as Long Beach so the elk tend to break water lines when they are visiting. A group of elk recently came down from the adjacent timberlands into a Grayland bog. They came in a night and it is assumed they left in a hurry at 4:00am when the sprinklers came on. On their way out they broke several sprinklers and did damage to the bog from running. Bio Harris and a couple of bog owners spent several nights and mornings looking in the immediate area for this group. Apparently they moved a good distance away as there have been no other sightings.

Elk updates:

Willapa Valley: Overall, landowners report a decrease in problems this spring. Some think it was our response to the problem, while at least one is convinced the elk died of hoof deformities. Two fields recently experienced an increase in activity. Master Hunters and Damage prevention permits are being provided to re-educate the elk.

Satsop Valley: The elk did not spend as much time on the pastures and hay fields this past winter and spring. In just the past couple of weeks they have been starting to test the safety of these areas. Biologist Harris is working on an appropriate response to these incursions.

Wynoochee Valley: Landowners whom Biologist Harris has been in contact with report the elk have not been around much lately. They are expected soon.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Management

Tick Pathogens: District 16 was informed from Washington Department of Health (DOH) that four of 20 ticks from areas west of the Elwha tested positive for tick pathogens; 1 positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* – Lyme Pathogen; 1 positive for *Borrelia miyamotoi* ; and 2 positive for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. The DOH staff noted that the miyamotoi pathogen had not been documented in Washington prior to this.

You can find out more about ticks in Washington at:

- **Tick webpage:**

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Pests/Ticks.aspx>

Lyme Disease webpage:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/LymeDisease.aspx>