

Wildlife Program

Week of August 10 – August 16, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Dirty Shirt Pack Area: Biologist Shepherd discussed strategies to protect cattle with allotment permit holders and contract range riders. Biologist Shepherd also discussed data sharing and other issues with permit holders. Biologist Shepherd and other staff worked multiple nights in the Dirty Shirt pack area as cattle were moved back up in elevation near where earlier depredations occurred. Biologist Shepherd sent out updates to producers and the US Air Force on an irregular basis due to lack of collar downloads and other activities.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock (DPCA-Ls): Biologist Shepherd sent out several new 2015-16 fiscal year DPCA-Ls for livestock producer signatures. Signatures were also obtained for invoices on existing DPCA-Ls.

Range Rider Direction: Biologist Shepherd and contract range riders discussed strategies in an area with wolf depredations on the Colville National Forest.

U.S. Air Force: Biologist Shepherd gave a presentation to Air Force Survival School officers, instructors, and students at Fairchild Air Force Base. Topics revolved around wolf habituation and other survival school training site issues related to working in wolf-occupied areas on the Colville National Forest.

Livestock Producer Contacts: Biologist Shepherd talked with several grazing permit holders in the Kettle Mountains, as well as North and South Chewelah Creeks in the Colville National Forest.

Wolf Activity: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent time in Ferry County in a federal grazing allotment looking for wolf sign. Sign was detected but no cattle were observed in the area.

Equipment Call: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Section Manager Simek spoke about equipment needs for Region 1 staff.

Producer Contacts: Supervisor McCanna was contacted by two producers and contacted another regarding wolf activity and locations in the Huckleberry and Dirty Shirt pack territories.

Collar Data Web Site: Supervisor McCanna was contacted by a producer in the Dirty Shirt pack territory. McCanna provided a user name and password for the producer to get online. McCanna worked with the producer over the phone to walk him through how the web site worked. The producer was pleased to have access to this data as his cattle are in the middle of the Dirty Shirt pack territory.

Representative and Commissioner Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna participated on the conference call with Region 1 Director Pozzanghera, Wolf Policy Lead Martorello, Conflict Specialist Shepherd, Representative Short, and Stevens and Pend Oreille County Commissioners. Several topics were discussed with field staff able to answer questions on the call.

Wolf Trapping Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Specialist Shepherd participated on the conference call with Becker, Roussin, and USDA Wade. The group discussed priority trapping areas in the state and timing to do so.

Meeting with Producer in the Huckleberry Territory: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a producer just west of the Huckleberry wolf territory to discuss the pack dynamics, data sharing, WDFW wolf management, and other wildlife questions. Additional producers in the area will also be contacted in the coming weeks.

Huckleberry Pack Deterrence Plan: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett made revisions to the Huckleberry Deterrence Plan and submitted it to the Wolf Policy Lead.

Confirmed Wolf Depredation on a Guard Dog: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett investigated a reported wolf depredation on a young Akbash cross sheep guard dog. Bennett met the producer at an area veterinarian clinic so the dog could be examined thoroughly. Wounds were shaved, cleaned, and treated with antibiotics. It looks as though the dog will make a full recovery. Correspondence with Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd were also made to discuss the wounds.

Wolf Collar Download Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with two producers to address occasional GPS collar downloads and concerns associated with the webpage.

Tucannon Pack: Biologist Earl drove out to meet with the range riders near Indian Tom to get an update from them. Range riders reported carcasses of ungulates and no cattle.

Collar Status: Biologist Earl received calls from producers with sensitive sharing agreements who have been very disappointed with the collar data website. Earl relayed information to them that he received from ODFW Biologist Morgan that the collar appears to be malfunctioning. They all wanted to know what the future plans were with that collared animal. Earl said he would try to find out and let them know.

Monthly Invoices: Biologist Earl received calls from cooperators who have a DPCA-L agreement. They wanted to know how to submit their monthly invoices for payment.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Teaway Chronology: Conflict Specialist Wetzel updated the chronology of activities in the Teaway wolf pack territory this week. No new livestock/wolf interactions were recorded.

Range Rider Direction: Conflict Specialist Wetzel met several times with cattle and sheep range riders in the Teanaway area. Range Rider McBride located the VHF-only male wolf in upper Indian Creek, accompanied by the GPS collared female. Both were in close proximity to the Red Top sheep band.

Wolf Activity: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Ranger Riders McBride and Johnson monitored wolf activity near cattle and sheep this week. One day was spent locating the VHF-only wolf in the Teanaway Pack. The wolf was located in upper Middle Creek, with the GPS female in close proximity to the Red Top sheep band. Cattle were also in the vicinity.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Orphaned Moose: Biologists Atamian, Lowe, Myers, Kujala, and Luers responded to concerns of an orphaned moose calf in Whitman County. The calf's mother had been hit on Highway 195 and put down by Washington State Patrol earlier in the week. Upon arrival, the female calf appeared healthy and highly mobile, and this after a week without mom and dealing with 100 degree heat. Given her size and ability to obtain resources on her own, it was decided to leave her alone rather than expose her to the risks of tranquilization and moving to an unfamiliar area.



USACE HMU Tour: Blue Mountains District Wildlife, Habitat, and Fish Biologists, as well as Regional staff, attended a tour of US Army Corps of Engineers Habitat Management Units along the Snake River to assist with identifying management strategies to meet the requirements of the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan. The USACE is deficient in riparian vegetation reimbursement acreage, and is trying to improve riparian habitats using a sustainable approach that does not rely on continued operation and maintenance of antiquated irrigation equipment.



US Army Corps of Engineers meeting and field trip

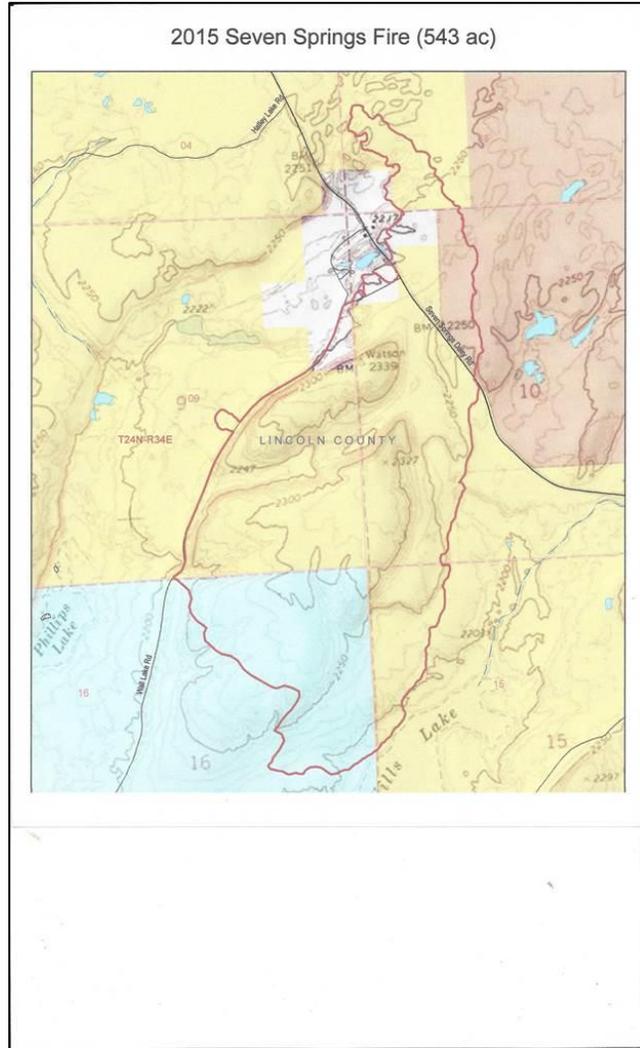
Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Range Fire on Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA): On Monday, August 10, a range fire started up at the “wheat hills” southwest of SLWA. It was believed to have been started by lightning, as were several other fires in the area that afternoon. The 543-acre “Seven Springs Fire” burned mostly on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property, a bit onto the two private inholdings between BLM and SLWA, and on 22 acres on SLWA. The fire flared up around 6:30 p.m. and crews had it mostly out by midnight, as winds died down after nightfall. Fire staff camped at SLWA headquarters that Monday evening and two nights after that, putting out hot spots and working other nearby Washington fires. On the map below, SLWA is brown, BLM is yellow, and the Department of Natural Resources is blue. Dashed square outlines are section lines.

Map of the Seven Springs fire on the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area Rye Ridge Fire: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice responded to a fire burning in the Black Butte Area on Thursday. The cause of the fire was lightning and it’s unclear if the fire originated on WDFW land. Approximately 250 acres of agency land was burned. The total size of the fire is 600 acres. Numerous aircraft and 20 – 40 firefighters worked on the fire. As of Sunday evening, according to DNR, the fire was mostly out.

Rye Ridge fire burning on the Joseph Creek side of the ridge



4-O Ranch WA –Spring Cleanup and Fence Removal: Biologist Woodall, Technicians Meisner and Steveson, and Intern John Surmeyer cleaned up debris lying around Plato Spring, including some old troughs, wire, t-posts, and pipe. They talked about the need for a fence and made some plans to build one around the spring due to livestock damage. It would take about 1000’ of fence. The spring was very active with wildlife use. Blue grouse, elk, and a bear were all using the spring. The crew then went and started removing some old stock fence. There are still plenty of fences to remove.



U of I Intern Surmeyer removing decrepit fence

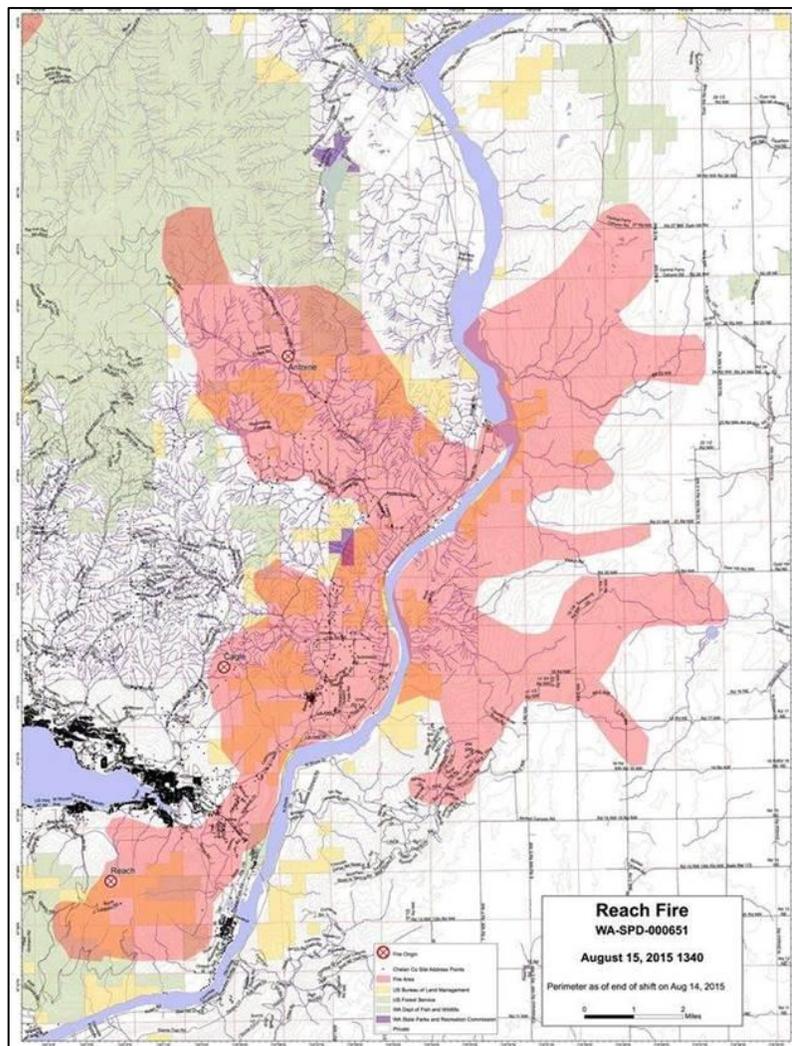


Plato Spring cleanup and debris

REGION 2

FIRES

Chelan Butte: A new series of wildfires started on Friday morning (August 14, 2015) in Chelan County following a storm that produced lightning strikes across the region. Dry conditions and the high winds following the storm allowed the multiple fires surrounding the towns of Chelan, Chelan Falls, and the Chelan Butte Wildlife Area to spread quickly, putting people and residences in danger. Multiple Level 3 evacuations were established within a 12-hour period, as the fires threatened homes, businesses, and the hospital in Chelan. The fires also affected travel significantly, with State Highways 97 and 97A being closed and stopping travel between Okanogan and Chelan counties. Within a short period, the fire spotted across the Columbia River into Douglas County and evacuations were established in the McNeil Canyon and other areas. A minimum of five fires were started in and around Chelan that same morning, including the Chelan Butte (Reach) Fire, the First Creek Fire, the Deer Mountain Fire, the Antoine Fire, and the Black Canyon Fire. As of mid-day Sunday, the fire on the Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area was limited to the section along its north and northeastern boundaries. Winds effectively kept the fire from spreading into the main portion of the wildlife area. However, the lack of resources required incident commanders to make people and residences the firefighting priority. Because the Columbia River bounds Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area to the east, we expect minimal resources will be available to fight fire established within the core of the wildlife management area. Prevailing winds out of the south and southeast have slowed its advance in that direction.



An image of the Chelan Butte (Reach) fire from Friday, August 14



Ignition point of the Reach Fire on August 14, 2015 (InciWeb map)



Reach Fire as high winds began to push the fire through City of Chelan, Aug 14 2:45 pm

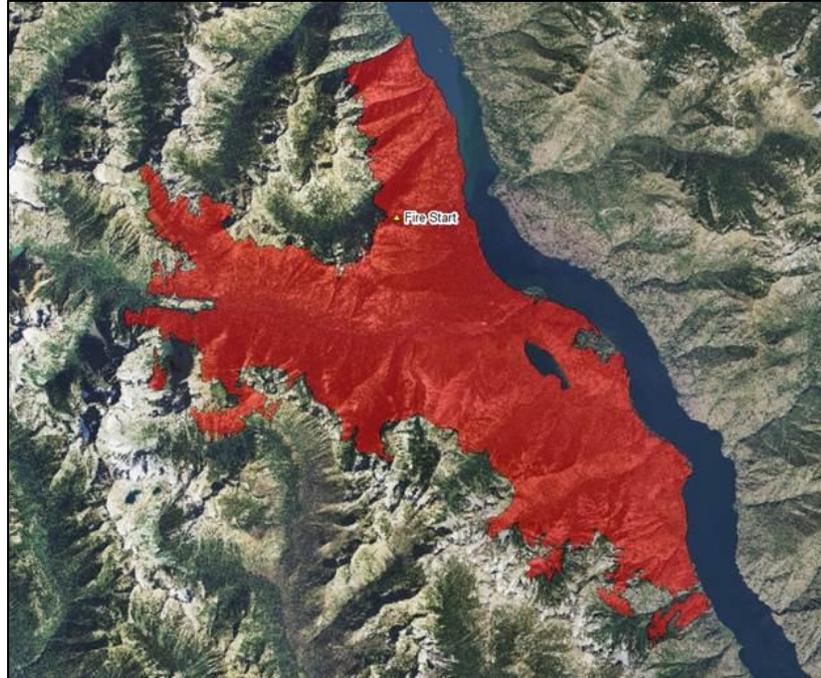


Reach Fire above Beebe Springs and Chelan Hatchery, August 14, 4:00 p.m.

Wolverine Fire: From its start on June 29 this summer, the Wolverine fire has expanded to close to 39,000 acres and has threatened the villages of Holden, Lucerne, and Stehekin. The fire remained relatively small until weather conditions on July 30 changed and the fire expanded dramatically. The fire made a quick advance in early August and engulfed Domke Lake. However, fears that the fire would spread rapidly southeast to 25-Mile Creek were not realized. The US Forest

Service (USFS) has closed a large area surrounding the fire to entry that may affect hunting opportunities this fall. Hunters should contact the USFS Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest for updates and have an alternate plan for hunting prepared in case fire or firefighting efforts limit access.

A map of the August 15 burn perimeter for the Wolverine fire along the south shore of Lake Chelan, Chelan County (June 29 start)



Okanogan Complex Fires: Manager Haug and Scotch Creek Assistant Manager Dupont have been representing their wildlife areas as resource advisors during the wildfires. The approximately 2000-acre fire spans roughly from Silver Hill on the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area to Fish Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife

Area, as well as east to Coulee Creek and west to Sinlahekin Road and the Conconully Reservoir. Assistant Manager Dupont has been assisting from the onset of the fire last week with logistical support and advising Okanogan National Forest Service staff on the best locations for dozer/handlines. Dupont has also been advising them of different habitat and cultural resources. Only 30 firefighters are currently on this fire, with resources spread thin throughout the county. WDFW personnel will meet and be briefed Monday morning to determine our further involvement with the fire.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery Capture/Release Activities: The team (joined by Diversity Technicians Andre and Mariah) resumed capture and release activities this week after a three week break with two events. On Tuesday, Technicians Gibbs and Satterwhite checked and repaired any damage to the funnel traps at Sagebrush Flat. On Wednesday, we used the funnel trap method at the larger SBF breeding enclosure. We were able to capture 23 rabbits. The 23 rabbits captured consisted of 16 new kits, two recap kits (being retained for breeding stock), one new adult (kit that eluded capture in previous years), and four recap adults. The new adult was given a PIT tag, and all adults were retained in the breeding enclosure. All kits were released to the wild at the Beezley Hills site. On Thursday we trapped at the Beezley Hills enclosure using the traditional box trap method. We captured 39 rabbits, including 27 new kits, one recap kit, four new adults, and seven recap adults. The seven recap adults were returned to the breeding enclosure. The 28 kits and four new adults were released to the wild in the Beezley Hills. Thank you to volunteers Emilio Bustos, Rosann Greene, and Dan Kjelland for their help. To date we have processed 487 rabbits, including 390 new kits, 31 new adults (elusive 2014 kits), and 66

recaptured rabbits. We have released 353 rabbits to the wild, including 172 at Sagebrush Flat and 181 at Beezley Hills.

Biologist Finger pioneered a new technique for capturing rabbits in the breeding enclosures. Newly emerged rabbits are still captured efficiently by using our standard technique of “snaking” underground artificial burrow tubes and by checking above ground tubes distributed across the enclosures. Setting traps at burrow entrances is another technique. However, it is time and people intensive. Because newly born rabbits are emancipated once they emerge from below ground, those not captured initially can become wise to some of the trapping methods and become difficult to capture. The new drive method employs a configuration of wings placed to funnel rabbits into a constricted area and ultimately into a trap. Rabbit herders spread out and move across a section of the enclosure, moving in unison to push rabbits into the funnel area and eventually into the trap. The new technique of driving rabbits into the funnel trap works well, and is less labor intensive than other capture methods. Six rabbits were caught in one drive this week.

Rabbits in the “duck trap” at Sagebrush Flat

Rabbit health: The test results from a moribund rabbit euthanized and sent in for testing came back indicating it had high levels of coccidian, high enough to be the cause of death. Four additional carcasses from rabbits found dead in breeding enclosures during trapping and husbandry activities were sent to WDFW Wildlife Health Specialist Katie Haman for necropsy. Three of these rabbits also presented high levels of coccidia. We are retaining 13 rabbits in the Sagebrush Flats nursery for a genetic swap with the Beezley Hills enclosure population and these rabbits are being treated with Amprolium in their water supply in an attempt to reduce coccidian levels prior to moving them. Coccidia levels in individuals are assessed using a floating procedure where the numbers of the protozoans can be counted from fecal pellet samples. Pellet samples are being collected pre-treatment, during the five day Amprolium treatment, and after completing treatments so Dr. Haman can monitor the effectiveness of treatment under a passive delivery methodology. Because a continuous process of recapture and treatment of rabbits over a week’s time is problematic, this will be a test to see if we can effectively influence coccidian levels through this passive treatment method. Treatment is based on the assumption that rabbits will ingest enough free water over the five-day period to be effective, and that the Amprolium treated water will not negatively affect their consumption rates relative to what is needed to reduce coccidian levels. If this test indicates that coccidia levels are reduced successfully, we will explore how to implement a similar method of treatment for rabbits in the larger breeding enclosures.



Western Gray Squirrel Statewide Survey: Biologist Gallie completed the second of three required visits to survey transects (series of baited hair-snare tubes) to determine occupancy and abundance of western gray squirrels in suitable habitat in Chelan County. Both areas surveyed historically contained western gray squirrels, but no recent confirmation of squirrels exists for the Upper Entiat Valley and Mission Creek. We placed five sampling transects in these two areas, and after two months, we have yet to recover a positive hair sample from a western gray squirrel. Similar results were recorded from sampling transects in the Tyee Ridge and Peshastin areas.



Both areas surveyed historically contained western gray squirrels, but no recent confirmation of squirrels exists for the Upper Entiat Valley and Mission Creek. We placed five sampling transects in these two areas, and after two months, we have yet to recover a positive hair sample from a western gray squirrel. Similar results were recorded from sampling transects in the Tyee Ridge and Peshastin areas.

Suitable western gray squirrel habitat in Upper Entiat, Chelan County

Badger Data Collection: Private Lands Biologist Braaten was able to collect and mail samples from two roadkill badgers this week for a statewide DNA project managed by Jeff Lewis of WDFW.

Roadkill Badger collection – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Rattlesnake research: Biologist Fitkin and local seasonal staff assisted USFS Biologist Rohrer pit-tag and collected biological samples from the latest batch of nuisance snakes. We are receiving more snakes than usual this year, likely a result of the unusually hot and dry weather. Data collected will add to local monitoring efforts and contribute to projects being headed up by Dr. Dan Beck at Central Washington University.

Rattlesnake handling 101 – Photo by Scott Fitkin





Northern Pacific Rattlesnake in a tube (note heat-sensing pits below eyes) – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass worked on marking trees in the project area with Department Forester Rod Pfeifle this week, which will continue with other WDFW foresters and Lands staff through the next two to four weeks to prep the commercial thinning sale for bid. Bass and Pfeifle also met with CAMP Engineer Kristen Kuykendall to discuss roads and access for the commercial thinning. Previously it was assumed that existing orphaned logging roads, with some adjustments for log truck turnarounds, would be suitable haul roads for the commercial sale. However, due to steep grades, water issues, and previous lack of standards for road placement, new access spur roads will have to be constructed as part of the sale, as well as a temporary bridge crossing. In return, twice as much extant road should be formally abandoned to prevent further sediment delivery and limit access. Bass will be discussing with land managers to decide future use of constructed roads, whether they should be temporary in nature or left in place to maintain access. Rod Pfeifle and Jamie Bass flagged, GPSed, and measured out the new road and truck turnaround needs. Bass worked on putting together a proposal for the new road and for the necessity to harvest 30-50% of the acreage in fall due to steep (10-12%) haul grades that would be too difficult for log trucks in winter to climb. Bass and Pfeifle also worked on contracts regarding pre-commercial thinning, layout, and road work. In the future, templates will be made to make the process faster and easier.

Private Lands/Access

Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA): Biologist Comstock attended another meeting in Ellensburg on the sage-grouse CCAA. It was well attended by many agencies, including FWS, the Farm Bureau, WSDA, NRCS, and DNR. Robust conversation covered an array of outstanding topics including how to determine if one is a “qualified expert,” how to implement conservation measures for “new” leks, coverage for herbicide application activities, predator management, and monitoring. Biologist Dougherty and Biologist Braaten met with NRCS staff and others to discuss and possibly define what a “qualified expert” would be, as it pertains to the impending CCAA rollout. The takeaway points from the discussion were

that there would need to be a training course developed in cooperation with WDFW staff and NRCS staff to ensure that all “qualified experts” would have the same skill set.

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

Wildlife Management

Migratory Bird Banding: Biologist Gallie continued banding mourning doves on the Bridgeport Bar Wildlife Area (with big help from Wildlife Area Technician Hastings) and at Waste Management Facility grounds in East Wenatchee. Success has picked up a bit, with 89 doves banded this week (mostly hatch-year), for a season total so far of 145. Frequent visits by ravens are likely the source of low dove visits early on, and with them no longer a problem, success has increased. Banding will continue on the Bridgeport Bar through next week up until the deadline of getting band data to Specialist Wilson and USFWS.



Mourning dove released with new band in Douglas County

– Photo by J. Gallie

Wildlife Areas

Closure-Shooting Range & Target Practice: Manager Furnari answered or returned four calls from users this week to see if the gun range was still open. One caller said, “Really? I’m trying to talk my buddies out of going to the range because I know how bad conditions are. I’d hate to be the one to start a fire.” After she acknowledged many declining safety indicators (e.g. nervous shooters, pertinent dire environmental factors from the Fuels Manager when we were dealing with a contractor wanting to receive an IFPL waiver from DNR on a riparian area, dangerous environmental conditions now surpassing two previous wildfires started at the shooting range, reports of new fires starting in the Methow Valley, roaming DNR wildfire crews being dispatched), she sought approval from her management to close the Wildlife Area’s shooting range and dispersed target practice activities. Up & down the chain she went as she received insightful input from a few DFW staffers. After she received Region 2’s Acting RPM Wildlife approval, she then coordinated with her PIO, Madonna Luers, for a Public Affairs news release and contacted local agencies/organizations (USFS, DNR, State Parks, and Methow Valley News). Note that hunting is still allowed. Since one day’s notice is required, Manager Furnari will install closed signs on Saturday.

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

Private Lands/Access



Fencing at Bear Creek #2



Everybody likes a freshly painted bathroom at Beaver Creek campground



Sage grouse hen with brood, Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Access Technician McAlavy with an adult mourning dove – Photo by E. Duvuvuei



Technicians Satterwhite, Gibbs, and Gaston banding mourning doves – Photo by E. Duvuvuei



Volunteer Fischer assisting with juvenile golden eagle capture – Photo by WDFW



Ingalls Creek/Headlight Basin-Chelan County – Photo by J. Gallie



More of the Alpine Lake Wilderness- and 2 young hikers that have a striking resemblance to Biologist Gallie – Photo by Gallie Family Recreating





From Top to Bottom – Helicopter landing zone next to Scotch Creek HQ, water ‘scooper’ planning dropping water on fire within Coulee Creek on Scotch Creek WLA, 20-person USFS crew going up to the lip of Coulee Creek, fire burning on Schallow Mountain above lake near Sugarloaf Campground, fire burning on Northside of Schallow mountain near Fish Lake and late afternoon fire on Scotch Creek WLA – Photos by Justin Haug



Manager Haug releasing biocontrol agents at the Chiliwist Wildlife Area – Photo by Carissa Haug

Cow moose near Forde Lake; a calf was present just out of frame – Photo by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman completed initial monitoring of snags in Section 3 of the Oak Creek Timber Sale. Nine newly created snags and one natural snag were inventoried and tagged. Monitoring will occur next year to assess use by cavity nesters and other wildlife. One snag was being used by western fence lizards, which came down from the top to see what Huffman was up to.



Douglas fir snag on Oak Creek Wildlife Area being used by western fence lizard

Fire: Assistant Manager Berry spent a day in the Rock Creek Unit posting wildlife area boundary signs and inspecting reader boards and kiosks for proper signing. While there, Berry noticed a smoke column from over twenty miles to the southwest, near Nelson Butte. Berry reported the fire and approximate location to Wenatchee dispatch (cwicc). USFS eventually engaged fire with four smoke jumpers, two heavy rotors, a tanker, and hiked a 20-person strike team into the fire, which ended up being in the William O. Douglas Wilderness.

Wildlife Management

Barn Owl Nest Box: District Biologist Fidorra received word that the Barn Owl Nest Box project that he suggested to the Grandview FFA student group received a grant to conduct the nest box project! The group hopes to install owl nest boxes near hay storage sites in Benton and Yakima counties. Barn owls nest under the tarps on stacked hay, and when hay is moved, the nestlings, if noticed, are often raised by Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitators. Blue Mountain received over 150 nestlings this past year from hay stacks, but many are presumably never found. Fidorra and Blue Mountain staff will assist the Grandview FFA to identify appropriate project sites and will provide technical assistance. This project benefits wildlife and the farmers who gain rodent control from the owls.

Duck Banding: District Biologist Fidorra, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, Technician Kaelber, and a volunteer trapped and banded ducks in three traps on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area. The Bailie Youth Ranch traps were successful, with ~70 mallards and nine wood ducks banded. No ducks were captured at the Windmill site, which was oddly abandoned by ducks after the trap was installed. Trapping and baiting will continue into early September. A new trap will be installed on the Windmill Ranch in the coming week. Also, banding on the private Barker Ranch was coordinated and will begin next week.



Male wood duck measurements, comparison of male and female wings, and watercolor portraits of male and female wood duck completed by volunteer Sasha Munters on the day of duck banding on Bailie Youth Ranch

Bat Detectors: District Biologist Fidorra placed bat detectors at two sites in Grant County and shipped data to Olympia. August is the third and final month of bat surveys for the year.

Mourning Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra conducted mourning dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery this week. Hatchery Specialist Roberts assisted with baiting efforts. Thirty-five new bands were deployed. Doves banded this year in District 4 totaled 182. One strategy learned for next year will be to take advantage of early trapping success by banding as much as possible in the first two weeks of July before wheat and corn harvest commences. The early harvest this year reduced trapping success throughout much of mid-July and August.

Hunting Prospects: District Biologist Fidorra prepared the District 4 Hunting Prospects document and worked with Biologist Bernatowicz to complete the draft WDFW Status and Trends Report for Region 3.

Duck Trapping: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, District Biologist Fidorra, and Access Tech Kaelber trapped ducks at the Windmill Ranch and Baillie

Youth Ranch. It was the first trapping session of the summer, and the Baillie site was productive as usual, but no ducks were captured at the Windmill site.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz baited the trap site, but did not initiate trapping due to low bird numbers and high human activity.

Waterfowl Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Yakama Nation Biologist Blodgett, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, and Washington Waterfowl Association volunteers to band ducks and test for Avian Influenza (AI) on the Yakama Reservation. Approximately 70 new ducks were banded and 50 were sampled for AI.

Status and Trend Reports: Biologist Bernatowicz updated the District 8 reports for Deer, Elk, Bighorn Sheep, and Mountain Goats.

Mountain Goat Aerial Surveys: Moore flew District 8's goat populations with Section Manager Rich Harris. Each population was flown during the early morning hours over three days to increase our chances of observing goats. The weather was great, with a slight overcast on a few days. Overall we observed 88, 173, and 135 goats in the Blazed Ridge, Naches Pass, and Bumping River units respectively.



Jess Hagerman coming in to pick up WDFW observers at Easton State Airstrip

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff spent most of the week installing new readerboards at various locations on the wildlife area.

Wildlife Management

Access Contracts: Stutzman worked primarily on Access contract issues throughout the week. Stutzman spoke with six landowners with expiring or old agreements about potentially renewing. Two landowners agreed to extend their agreements, and two others agreed to reenroll their acreage that was formally in the program.

Benton County Access Signs: Stutzman posted or replaced access signs at three Benton County properties.

Franklin County Access Questions: Stutzman received calls from three hunters with questions about access in Franklin County.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky corresponded with a neighboring landowner over the condition of the newly rebuilt north boundary fence. The contractors left miles of old wire on the ground that was supposed to have been removed. He is concerned about his livestock getting tangled in the wire. Lopushinsky will work with CAMPS to get this resolved.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa serviced the following access areas: Tim's Pond, Oak Creek, Rowe, Mellis Road, Fitzsimmons, Donald Road, Ponds 1 & 2, Pond 3, Ponds 4 & 5, Buena, Zillah Bridge, Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway junction, King horn Slough, Mattoon, Fio Rito, and Thrall.

Hazard Trees: Access Manager Garcia worked on addressing several hazard trees at Kinghorn Slough. One tree in particular, a large cottonwood, is leaning towards private property, with outbuildings, and potentially the house, within the fall zone. The tree is growing in the wetland area (soft ground), and it appears that the roots have been slowly pulling up as the tree leans. Due to the size of the tree and the direction of the lean, Access Manager Garcia has contacted several tree service companies to get quotes on the cost of removal. Once he has the cost estimates, a decision will be made on the best option for removal.



Hazard tree leaning over private property



Close up view of tree

Wildlife Management

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand surveyed for additional elk damage impacts to a large apple orchard north of Prosser. Repairs were made to one of the LP gas cannons currently being used to haze elk from the crops. Although elk activity was still observed in the area, it appears their nightly raids have shifted to nearby irrigated corn plots.

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand hiked in to Bennett Springs near Rattlesnake Mountain to monitor elk activity and the condition of the water source. Very little elk activity was observed, and the spring had completely dried up.

Deer Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand followed up with a landowner who last week reported a complaint of deer damage to a young planting of apple trees near Prosser. So far, several of the non-lethal deterrents have kept the deer away from the crop.

Park Creek Elk: Conflict Specialist Wetzel monitored elk in the Park Creek damage area. Elk use of the area decreased after hunting started August 1.

Thorp Hazing: A master hunter was activated to haze deer from a Thorp commercial vegetable garden.

Yakima Canyon Deer Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel placed a Region 3 Master Hunter in contact with a vineyard manager in the Yakima Canyon to assist in hazing deer from grapes. One deer may be harvested if hazing efforts are not successful.

Taneum Creek Temporary Fence: Conflict Specialist Wetzel performed maintenance of a temporary fence across Taneum Creek. A camera placed at the location has only recorded deer at the fence location. No elk have been reported in the agricultural area after the temporary fence was placed.



DPCA: Conflict Specialist Wetzel processed eight new DPCA's this week and issued 25 damage permits.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris provided edits to the BPA contractor on a section of the draft of the aerial herbicide application biological assessment (BA) that included the project description, herbicide rates, and conservation measures. She also spent time reviewing information on herbicide drift reduction to determine appropriate buffers for sensitive features, and environmental risk assessments for herbicides proposed for use under the BA.

Cultural Resource Review: Manager Confer Morris provided information on 2015 projects needing cultural resource review to BPA's Environmental Protection Specialist.

Condition Assessment: Manager Confer Morris provided Olympia staff with further facility information, completing a condition assessment on the buildings on the wildlife area.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Lightning started a small fire on the Parke Creek Unit on August 10. DNR was able to get helicopters on the scene quickly and the fire was contained at approximately one acre.

Taneum Creek Encroachment Survey: Manager Winegeart met with DNR recreation manager Mike Williams regarding the recent encroachment survey in Taneum Creek. An adjacent private landowner had been installing private property signage, chasing other public recreationists off of state lands, and building several structures on WDFW and DNR properties. While on site, a Mid-Columbia Fisheries crew was also seen working to remove a recently constructed rock dam across Taneum Creek at this site. DNR will send a letter asking that the landowner remove all structures and signage.



Stream adjacent fire place built on DNR property



Mid-Columbia Fisheries crew removing rock dam across Taneum Creek

Private/No trespassing sign recently installed on Taneum Creek Road

Inspection/Tour: Assistant Manager Hunt and Tech Leuck toured the T18N, R15E acquisition to acquaint Leuck with the area (checker-boarded with USFS), and inspect gates and signage. They found things to be mostly in good order, including the gate that has been cut, pulled down, and bi-passed multiple times by wood poachers. While close, they also checked the Manastash Cabin and took some photos. We intend to use one on the planned interpretive sign.



Adjustable Cable Locks: Assistant Manager Hunt is pricing adjustable cable locks designed for the new trail cams that we purchased, and continues with desk catchup. Hunt also met with Tarp-it crews to tarp up the outside hay stacks that were uncovered. It was a bit of a battle with yellow-jacket nests, but we're covered.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry picked up bags of litter, collected by a volunteer group consisting of explorer scouts from Tacoma. The group cleaned up several dispersed sites along the Tieton River.

Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project: Forester Mackey closely monitored the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project to ensure timber sale compliance. Unit 5-1 is approximately half complete, and no work will occur this week due to contractor concerns with extremely dry conditions.

Browse Tubes: Forester Mackey coordinated a project with more than a dozen RMEF volunteers to remove the remaining “browse tubes” left on Ponderosa Pine plantings by Plum Creek in T17R15 Section 31. Three pickups were filled with collected tubes and were properly disposed of.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Species of Greatest Conservation Need Surveys: District 13 staff placed small mammal traps at two sites on Guemes Island in order to collect specimens for a genetic analysis of the Shaw Island vole, a species of greatest conservation need thought to occur only in the San Juan Archipelago. The San Juan Preservation Trust and a local landowner graciously allowed traps to be placed on their properties. Trap lines were run for three consecutive nights and although runways that indicate vole presence were abundant, only one deer mouse and one vole were caught. Unusually hot, dry conditions may be affecting small mammal movements and may have contributed to the disappointing results. A graduate student studying garter snakes in the islands also reports unusually slow snake activity at this time. Very few small mammal specimens exist in the natural history museum. These specimens will be donated to the University of Washington Burke Museum.

District 13 staff set traps along transect line in vole habitat on Guemes Island



Waterfowl Trapping/ Avian

Influenza sampling: Biologist DeBruyn and staff from the private lands program continued live trapping of local mallards. Banding is being done to provide data for nationwide harvest modeling and some ducks are being sampled for the presence of High Path Avian Influenza. The most productive trap is near a lake where HPAI was first detected (in this country) last December. Forty mallards were trapped for the first time this week, of which 25 were sampled for HPAI. This brings the number of samples taken in August to 45 out of a goal of 60.

Mallard Banding/Sampling on the Whatcom Wildlife Area



Marine Waterfowl Molting Surveys: District 13 staff continued preparation for this late summer molting scoter survey in Puget Sound. High density areas will be revisited to obtain more precise information on species/sex distribution for potential use in molting captures and banding next year.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Deer Protection: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with WDFW Law Enforcement Sergeant Fairbanks on a call to Lummi Island where a deer had been observed with fishing net and a yard ornament entangled in its antlers. The obstruction was visibly rubbing and cutting into the face of the animal at various locations. Upon arriving at the residence, the deer was observed and immobilized. The netting was able to be removed and the deer quickly recovered from the immobilization. While responding to Lummi Island, a report of a deer caught in a hammock was reported in Anacortes, Washington. The reporting party was advised to cut the hammock to free the deer. The deer was later reported numerous times as it was observed dragging the hammock around caught in its antlers. Sergeant Fairbanks, Officer Stout, Witman, and Conflict Supervisor Caldwell responded to the area, located the deer, and immobilized it. The hammock was cut free from the deer's antlers and leg. The deer quickly recovered from the immobilization drugs. No physical damage was noted for the Anacortes deer other than antler rub.



Lummi Island deer with and without obstruction before and during chemical immobilization

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the two transient debris sites were cleaned up this past week. Through a coordinated effort between WDFW, Master Hunter volunteers, Snohomish County Environmental Cleanup Program, Snohomish County Sherriff's office, and a Department of Ecology Youth Corps, the two sites were completely cleared of waste, debris, toxics, and junk. The trash filled a dump truck and trailer and was hauled away, including a boat that had been used to enter the property from the river. Appropriate signage will be posted at the two sites to deter future illegal activity.



Before cleanup of transient debris sites



After cleanup

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm started seasonal mowing in preparation for the hunting season. Service roads, access trails, and portions of the south field were completed before mechanical failure of the tractor ended the effort. Manager Boehm also cleared a three-trunked mature maple tree that had fallen and was blocking one of the main trails.

Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Friebel uploaded groundwater and surface water data from the monitoring stations on the site while construction was underway. Following the data upload, Brokaw calibrated and graphed the data for analysis by the project engineers.

Construction is underway on the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project. In this photo, you can see an excavator building the new setback dike (left) and the new water storage pond (right).



Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park:

Manager Kessler provided an update of activities relating to Tennant Lake for the monthly Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park meeting. The non-profit Friends group works to promote and perform wildlife activities on the two parks.

Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Ducks Unlimited manager who is working on the Rainbow Pond water control replacement project at the Lake Terrell Unit. The contract for the water control replacement has been issued, and the project should begin in the next few weeks. There is currently duck stamp funding available for just this project, but there may be funds available soon that would allow the replacement of the Intalco Pond water control.

Lake Terrell Osprey Nesting Platforms: Manager Kessler contacted an arborist who will build two osprey nesting platforms in trees at the Lake Terrell Unit. He will use tree branches to form natural platforms for the osprey to nest upon. These types of natural platforms have been used in other areas with good success. It is hoped the work can be performed within the next two months.

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

Wildlife Management

Pitman-Robertson reports and Hunting Prospects: District 14 biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn completed the Status and Trend Reports and the Hunting Prospect report for 2015-2016. Both of these documents help to inform the public of wildlife issues in District 14.

Wildlife Areas

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with two Master Hunter volunteers to continue seasonal trail clearing on the main trail.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that three community volunteers are caring for the pheasant pens and the native plant nursery. Approximately 50 native trees and shrubs will be transported to the Spencer Island Unit for planting later this season.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed spending plans for each of the construction tasks that will be completed this biennium and entered them into the WDFW financial tracking software. Additionally, he completed an indirect cost waiver form and forwarded it for signature and also requested a status update on scheduling of a WDFW construction crew.

Skagit Acquisition Team: The team scheduled a date for its next meeting in early September, at which it will discuss the status of securing additional waterfowl forage and hunting lands in Skagit County and plan the next steps.

Lake Terrell Pheasants: Manager Kessler monitored the 315 pheasants in the pens at Lake Terrell. He fed and watered the birds and made sure there were no problems in the pens. No fatalities have been found. Kessler also started contacting volunteers who will be helping with the pheasant releases. Two veteran releasers and two new releasers are now on the schedule for this hunting season.

Skagit Headquarters: Washington Waterfowl Association volunteers began work on the ADA accessible viewing blind this weekend. Manager Rotton coordinated with the contract mower to remove the blackberries and other vegetation. Meis and Cosgrove will prepare the site for blind installation during the next few weeks.

Island Unit: Cosgrove spent three days mowing dikes, roads, trails, and fields on the Island Unit with the John Deere 5300 and brush-hog. Cosgrove and Meis coordinated with and assisted local stakeholders with installing footbridges on the Island Unit to improve hunter and administrative access. Two large steel and two wooden footbridges were installed.

Private Lands/Access Management

Natural Resource Technician Otto prepped several Quality Waterfowl Hunt sites in Whatcom and Skagit counties for the upcoming hunt season

418 Elk Hunt: Natural Resource Technician Otto organized hunter information and distributed it to the private lands access program and law enforcement team. He also met with a hunter who was unable to attend the pre-hunt coordination meeting this past weekend and explained hunting



regulations, in addition to providing the hunter with a contact list, general hunt information, and his key for gate access. Biologist Hans is also following up with other hunters who were not able to attend the scheduled meeting.

Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement Projects: Natural Resource Technician Otto performed a monthly check of the sites where barley has been planted. The sites are looking good despite less than ideal growing conditions this summer.

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

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Natural Resource Technician Cogdal installed a game camera to monitor elk crossing Highway 20 just east of Sedro Woolley, where elk have been observed crossing along with one recent car/elk collision. Cogdal also checked boat access sites and walk in sites for Elk Area 4941 hunter access.

Landowner Meetings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a member of the Washington Cattleman's Association who was concerned about elk activity in Skagit County. Witman walked several areas with the landowner and discussed potential solutions if in fact elk are entering and crossing the highway. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal has been monitoring elk activity in the area of concern and has not made any observations so far.

King County Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls of elk damaging crops in the Enumclaw and Carnation areas. Damage occurred mainly to corn, vegetables, and infrastructure (fences). Smith constructed temporary electric fladry fences to deter elk in two locations. One property consisted of 80 acres of corn bordered by a large grass lawn on the neighboring property. Fencing was constructed along two sides to discourage elk (over 50 head at times) from entering and bedding in the lawn area. Fladry was also added to the existing barbed-wire fence to deter elk from entering the corn. In another location, fladry fencing was constructed to deter elk from damaging pumpkins and other vegetables. A third fladry fence (also a pumpkin crop) was checked for functionality and maintenance needs. Smith also coordinated placing South Sound Master Hunter elk permit holders on properties with ongoing crop damage in the Snoqualmie Valley.

Wildlife Areas

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Bran Boehm continues to work with WDFW Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to sign up community and Master Hunter volunteers for upcoming field work and the pheasant release program.

Hunting Season Preparation: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reviewed sign inventory in preparation of posting seasonal signage alerting users that hunting season starts

September 1. Other hunting-related informational signage will be posted in the coming weeks so all users are informed.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton discussed site access timing with representatives from Vista Clara. This group is performing research on ground water characteristics using Leque Island as a test case.

Skagit Headquarters: Meis worked with CAMP Project Inspector William Yarborough to take follow up measurements of the Skagit Moorage Bank Repair project. The private landowner had requested that we take follow-up measurement of the site post project. The measurements indicate the bank loss is stabilized with minimal loss in a few locations since the project was implemented in 2011.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton met with project engineer Steve Liske with Ducks Unlimited on site to discuss details of construction of the Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project. Work on the site has started and is scheduled to be completed early in September. Cosgrove and Meis assisted with monitoring of the ongoing Samish Unit wetland enhancement project monitoring ditch spoil placement areas and focus areas along the raised berm area. Manager Rotton is coordinating with an Eagle Scout on the installation of a waterfowl hunting blind for his community project to be installed the last weekend of August.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Biologist Hans continued contacting and preparing contracts, editing the GoHunt website, and updating unit details for the private lands access program team. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto coordinated the signing of A19 payment forms and landowner contracts. Natural Resource Technician Otto was in the field meeting with the landowners while Biologist Hans process paperwork in the office.

Whidbey Island Deer Hunt: Biologist Hans worked with a landowner and the contracts department to resolve contract inaccuracies. The issue has been resolved and the landowner expressed gratitude towards the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for handling the matter so quickly.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated one new hunter education class in Region 4. Dazey ordered supplies from the warehouse for several instructor teams. Dazey delivered supplies to the teaching team that teaches at the Renton Fish and Game range. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Lance Chaar to hold an on-line field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Chief Instructor Chaar will be conducting evaluations at the Region 4 office each Monday during August. Hunter education policy calls for a reminder letter to be sent to all instructors who as of July have not taught a class in 2015. The letter reminds the instructors that policy requests that they teach at least one class a year or risk being dropped as an active instructor. Dazey answered questions from Chief Instructor Bozell about class size, updated contact for instructor Fitzgerald, who has now moved to Region 6, assisted Chief

Instructor Chaar to correct his class report to Kalkomey, assisted Chief Instructor Vincent to recruit instructors for his upcoming classes at the Marysville Rifle Club, and assisted Region 1 Coordinator Whorton by providing a template for the hunter education trailer check out.

Community Outreach: Coordinator Dazey provided information the Sky Valley Recreation group about rock dams and provided a pamphlet explaining why they are damaging to the fish.

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

Training: Biologists Yarborough, DeBruyn, and Rotton completed the Sexual Harassment training for managers. DeBruyn also completed several online training modules and Yarborough completed Module 1 of Leadership Training in Olympia.

Firearm Qualification and Training: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell conducted and passed the WDFW firearm qualification and training course.

C.O.R.T. Training: Dazey attended CORT training to better understand this requirement that all Master Hunter applicants are required to take.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Invasive Species Removal: Biologist Bergh visited Conboy National Wildlife Refuge to see their fyke net setup, which is used to catch invasive fish and frogs. They set these seine/hoop net combinations in the ditches and creeks on the refuge during the evening hours in order to catch predators (mainly invasive bullfrogs and carp) or Oregon spotted frogs. There is a pond connected to a ditch on property adjacent to the Sondino Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area that may benefit from a similar setup to remove invasive bullfrogs. This would help eliminate a source population and further our bullfrog eradication efforts on the wildlife area in order to protect state endangered western pond turtles.

Fyke net setup at Conboy National Wildlife Refuge

Western Gray Squirrel Project:

Biologists Doorly and Stephens conducted the second check of

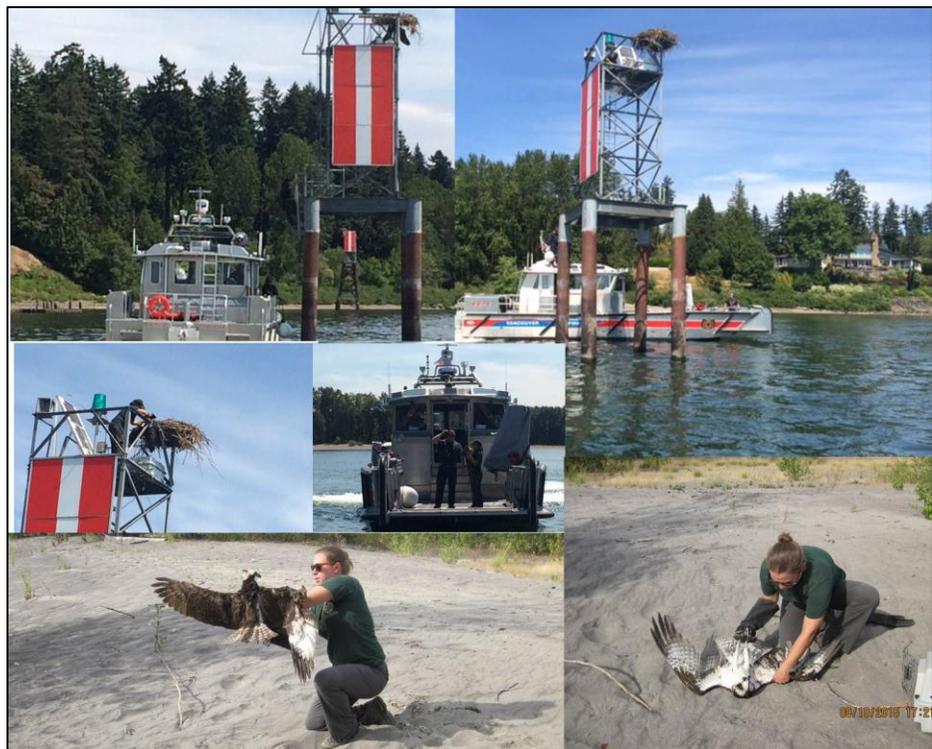


western gray squirrel hair tubes that were set out in Camp Bonneville last month. This monitoring effort is part of a state-wide study to determine the range of western gray squirrels. This information will be used in conducting a status review for this state-listed species. No western gray squirrels have been detected to date.

Calf at Heel Surveys: Elk Specialist Hoenes, along with Biologists Doorly and George, was able to attempt calf at heel surveys for seven hoof disease survival study elk this week. The goal of calf at heel surveys is to determine if elk that were found to be pregnant at the time of capture were able to successfully produce a calf. A confirmation of a calf is accomplished through observing a calf nursing from a collared cow, or observing the calf and cow in the same location independent of other cows in the group. This is an attempt to gather reproductive information on cow elk affected by hoof disease. The surveys proved to be very challenging and only one confirmation took place as of Wednesday of this week. One other collared elk was sighted, but it could not be confirmed whether either of the two calves in the same herd belonged to her. Calf at heel surveys will continue through this week and next.

Osprey Rescues: Officer Van Vladriken, Officer Moats, and Biologist George captured two ospreys in distress this week. The first was tangled in fishing line that had been collected by the adults as nesting material. Upon arrival, the bird was found to be hanging upside down at the top of a channel marker in the Columbia River and was suffering from exhaustion and minor injuries to the tangled foot. He was cut free from the marker and all fishing line was removed from the tangled foot. More fishing line was found within the nest and was removed as well. The second osprey had a compound fracture of the right wing and was taken to the Audubon Society bird rehabilitation center. Firemen from the Vancouver Fire Department were able to assist with the rescue of the first osprey, which was later released. Thank you to the fire department for their assistance in this effort.

Osprey rescue



Klickitat Wildlife Area

Klickitat River Canyon Reconnaissance: Biologist Anderson, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, and Enforcement Officer Bolton conducted a float trip through the Klickitat River Canyon to document information for the Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan. The emphasis of the reconnaissance was to record the location of a new bald eagle nest site, locate a potential peregrine falcon eyrie, and evaluate dispersed camping sites in the Klickitat Canyon. Few site visits are conducted to this area each year due to the remote nature of this part of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. We appreciate having access to Enforcement Program's drift boat for the site visit.



Klickitat River Canyon Reconnaissance

Roadside Brush Clearing: Willows, spirea, and other shrubs and trees have grown out to the edge of the Glenwood Highway near the Klickitat Wildlife Area Headquarters, interfering with access to the fence and serving as cover for animals that might be beside the road. Technician Davis cut stems and branches back to the fence line and disposed of the material by chipping it.

Patrol of Soda Springs Unit: Technician Davis checked several ponds and springs for water retention. Most of these are exhibiting low water levels. A few campers were contacted and all were taking measures to comply with the emergency restrictions on activities due to the high fire danger.

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

Access

Vancouver Lake: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes attempted to eliminate many yellow jacket nests in the restroom door, reader board, shooting range table, and around concrete barriers in the parking lot. They were surprised to find nests in every pipe opening on the shooting range table. It is difficult to get the spray onto the hidden nests in the restroom door and pipe openings. In addition, Rhodes painted the concrete island at the entrance.



Painting the concrete island at Vancouver Lake entrance

Barbers Access Site: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes picked up 20 pounds of trash and installed a new restroom seat.



Installing new restroom seat

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

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Elk: Conflict Specialist Conklin received a call about elk breaking into haylage bales in the Randle area. Conklin responded to elk damage on a commercial corn field in Mossyrock. A kill permit was issued to the landowner, who has worked with the department for a long time. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a call regarding an elk with severe hoof disease. Unfortunately the elk was in an area believed to be a no-shoot zone in Longview and could not be euthanized by Conklin. The information was given to Enforcement for possible follow up.

District 9 Wildlife Conflict

Elk: The Wildlife Conflict Specialist met with a farmer in Underwood experiencing heavy damage from elk on his hay fields. Conklin issued a kill permit to the landowner who has been working with the conflict program for a long time. Conklin also met with a farmer in the Glenwood area experiencing elk damage to his crops. The landowner at this time is reluctant to enter into an agreement with WDFW. He was issued a bird banger and projectiles to try as nonlethal options.

Deer: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with the owner of a vineyard in Underwood. The vineyard is very stressed due to the hot weather conditions and is now experiencing deer damage. The owner entered into a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement with WDFW. Conklin will send a Master Hunter to the property to assess if it can be safely hunted for deer. A bird banger was issued to the property owner to use when the weather permits.

Deer damage on the edge of the vineyard

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mourning Dove Trapping: Dove trapping and banding ended Thursday evening. Biologist Michaelis, assisted by Officer Cilk and two other volunteers, captured and banded a total of 62 doves (23 adults and 39 juveniles). The quota for western Washington was met and surpassed the number of birds captured from last year by 17. This year capture of birds began to peak around August 9. A third location was added late in the session and yielded two adults.



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

Hunting Management: Manager Belson coordinated with Sergeant Anderson to finalize plans for enhanced waterfowl hunting opportunities this season at the River's End site of the North Olympic Wildlife Area / Lower Dungeness Unit. In essence, hunting will be restricted to designated blind locations on a first come, first served basis. Field improvements to support this new model were initiated with the assistance of Master Hunter Tucker and a two-man mowing crew from the Jamestown S'Klallam tribe who were working at the WLA on a nearby project and offered to help. A combination of marked blinds and trails, ample elbow room, predictable hunting pressure, and a new shotgun shell restriction should greatly increase hunt quality during what is anticipated to be an excellent waterfowl hunting season.

Mowing a new access trail to the hunting area at the mouth of the Dungeness River



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

Jeff Skriletz Retirement: Program Manager Calkins and Biologist Murphie met with district Biologist Jeff Skriletz to assist him with the transfer of inventory items and related paperwork prior to his retirement. All equipment, files, and related items were accounted for and documented.

Jeff spent 37 years with WDFW and worked in almost every program in the agency. He leaves a legacy of commitment to public service for others to emulate. As a final action, Jeff provided Calkins and Murphie a tour of private land waterfowl and pheasant hunting sites that he has secured over the years. Jeff took great pride in this component of his work as a service to the public. Along this trip Jeff shared many memories and stories. His knowledge and skills will be missed, but we all wish him a happy retirement as he enjoys some of his favorite pursuits. Jeff's last day was August 14.

