

Wildlife Program

Week of July 13 – July 19, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Wolf Trapper Training: All Region 1 Wildlife Conflict staff attended the one day wolf trapping training in Wenatchee.

Depredation Investigation: Department staff and the Stevens County Sheriff's Department investigated a dead cow in the Dirty Shirt Wolf Pack territory. The investigation and necropsy determined the cow had been killed by wolves.

Dirty Shirt Chronology: Supervisor McCanna created a chronology of events and work being done to prevent further depredations. McCanna continues to update the chronology.

Cattle Producers: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with cattle producers in the Dirty Shirt Wolf Pack territory offering data sharing agreements, explaining the departments DPCA agreements, showing current wolf locations (daily by phone or emailed maps), relaying information on cattle seen and their behavior, and wolf howling activity during night patrols.

Wolf Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on seven conference calls related to the Dirty Shirt depredations.

Night Patrols: Supervisor McCanna and District 1 conflict staff worked night and day patrols Thursday through Sunday in the Dirty Shirt area using non-lethal tools to keep wolves away from cattle. Two range riders worked Monday through Thursday in the Dirty Shirt area and will do so again this week.

Air Force Staff: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with Air Force staff on different occasions. There will be 86 students in the field through this Thursday in the area of the Dirty Shirt Pack. Instructors were provided information for students and staff to use whistles and flashlights if they encounter wolves or hear howling. A report will be relayed to department staff if any wolves were heard or seen along with any dead cattle on the range.

Investigating Cluster Sites: Supervisor McCanna and various department staff members investigated multiple GPS cluster sites in the Dirty Shirt Pack area. Nothing was found at any of the clusters investigated.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker edited the Lookout Pack's deterrence plan. There were several errors in the document, some of which were based on outdated information. She sent the new document to staff in Olympia so the corrected version could be placed on the WDFW

website. Specialist Heilhecker tried contacting a rancher to discuss radio-collared wolf locations. She left a message but has not heard back from the rancher. Specialist Heilhecker received a call from the Okanogan County Cattlemen’s Association regarding the livestock depredation in Stevens County. She called Supervisor McCanna in Region 1 to notify him of their concerns.

Wolf Detection: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen found a single set of wolf tracks in the Hidden Lakes vicinity of the Pasayten Wilderness while conducting loon and grizzly bear work.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Teanaway Wolves: Biologist Moore assisted Conflict Specialist Wetzel on a livestock depredation investigation in the Teanaway. The depredation was reported by WSU Graduate Student Gabe Spence. Wetzel, Spence, and Moore investigated the area, finding a totally consumed yearling cow and plenty of wolf sign. After collecting and reviewing evidence, the mortality was concluded to be a wolf kill.

Wolves: Biologist Bernatowicz spoke with Conflict Specialist Wetzel about the Teanaway wolves feeding on a domestic calf carcass.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

WT Wooten WA – Illegal Dams: AWAM Dingman assisted Bill Dowdy of the US Forest Service (USFS) in breaching an illegal dam that was constructed across the Tucannon River near the USFS Guard Station. The dam was breached to get water flowing through. USFS came back the following day with a cross-cut saw to saw the logs up so no one is able to rebuild the illegal dam.



Illegal recreational dam built across the Tucannon River near the USFS Tucannon Guard Station

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): Biologist Lewis attended a quarterly RCPP update meeting for partners involved in the new conservation program. The meeting was hosted by the Palouse Conservation District (PCD) and had representatives from Palouse Rock Lake CD, Whitman CD, Pine Creek CD, Adams CD, Lincoln CD, PCD, Latah CD, WA NRCS,

ID NRCS, ID Fish and Game, WA Fish and Wildlife, and WA Dept. of Ecology. Topics covered during the meeting included screening sheets, ranking sheets, available practices, and program timelines. The new program is focused on the improving water quality, soil health, and habitat in the Palouse River watershed. Signups for the new program will begin this fall.

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

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

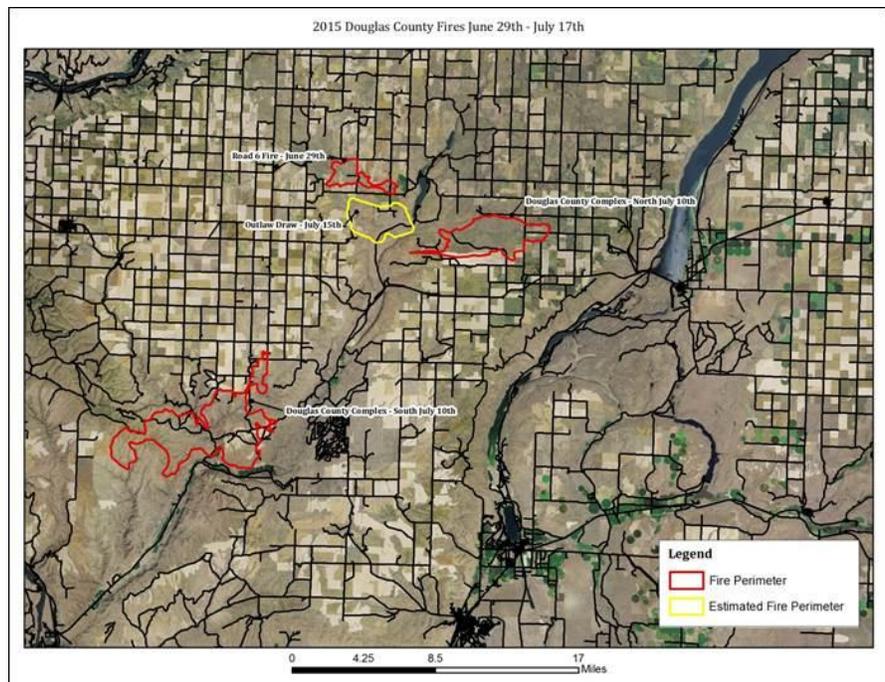
Regional Directors Meeting: Supervisor McCanna and conflict staff members who were part of the Northeast Washington Wolf Response Team received the 2014 Team Award.

REGION 2

FIRE

Douglas County: Private Lands Biologist Braaten visited the Jameson Fire Burn (approx. 7,000 acres) to see if any SAFE-CRP acres burned or any important habitat (i.e. Davis Sage Grouse Lek and the Dormaier Unit) Private Lands Biologist Braaten found the wildfire came close to the WDFW Dormaier Unit and Davis Sage Grouse lek, but the areas were not burned. Most of wildfire burned shrub-steppe habitat on BLM and CRP lands, as well as some wheat on private and federal BLM lands. Another wildfire started on 7/16 burned the Outlaw Draw area southwest of Jameson Lake, burning 2000 acres.

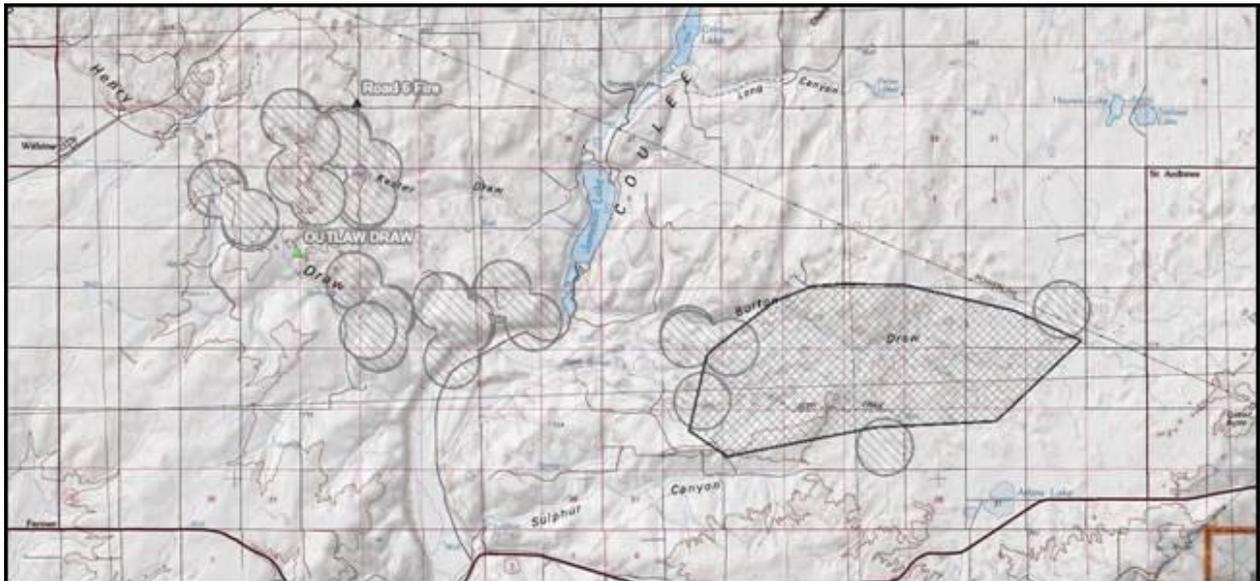
Burn area – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Additional Fire Activity: Fire activity continued over the past week with the start of the Outlaw Draw fire in Central Douglas County. While the potential for wildfire remains extremely high, all current fires are either contained or under active suppression and in control.



Perimeter and MODIS detections of the Douglas County Complex Fire



Perimeter and MODIS detections of the Road 6, Outlaw Draw and Burton Draw fires

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

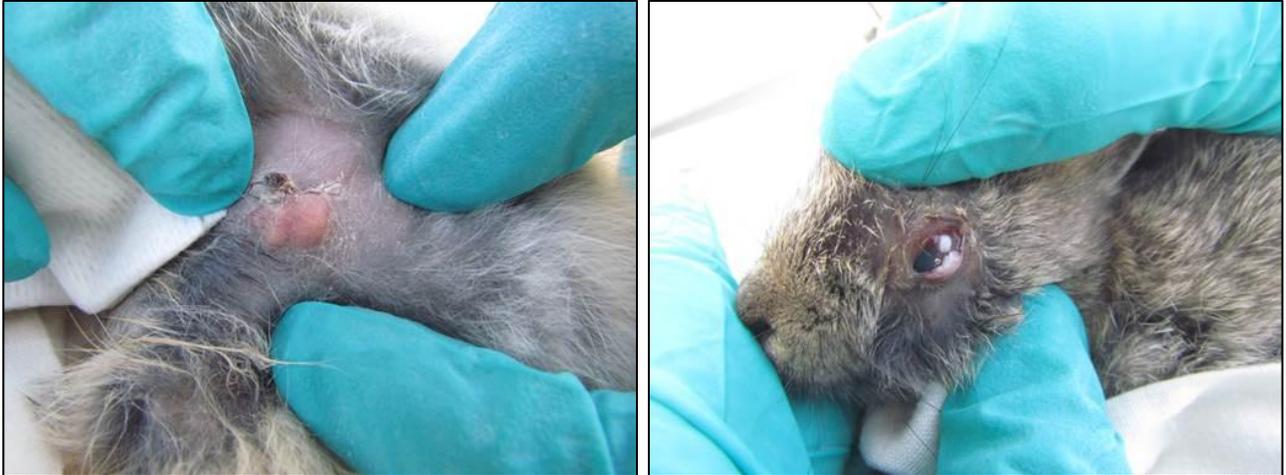
Pygmy rabbit: Biologist Gallie assisted Biologist Wisniewski and the team in conducting pygmy rabbit kit captures from both the large breeding enclosure (LE) on Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area and the Beezley enclosure (BE). Young were released into the Beezely recovery area. We captured 19 new kits from the LE and 25 from the BE. At this point, it looks as if the litter production has been completed and the focus will be to capture the remaining kits from earlier in the breeding season. Capture rates should start to decrease from here on out.

Wednesday we trapped at LE. We captured a total of 19 rabbits, including four adults that went back into the enclosure and 15 kits, 13 of which are held in the nursery awaiting genetic info for a potential swap. We had two kits that we put back into LE. One had multiple bot fly maggots in it and the other had a small cyst of some sort on the stomach and some issues with its eye.

Thursday we were at Beasley trapping. We captured a total of 33 rabbits, including eight adults that went back into the enclosure and 25 kits, 22 of which were released to the wild and three that were put into the nursery until we get some more release tubes dug in next week.



Images captured from trail cameras set around the Beezley PR enclosure



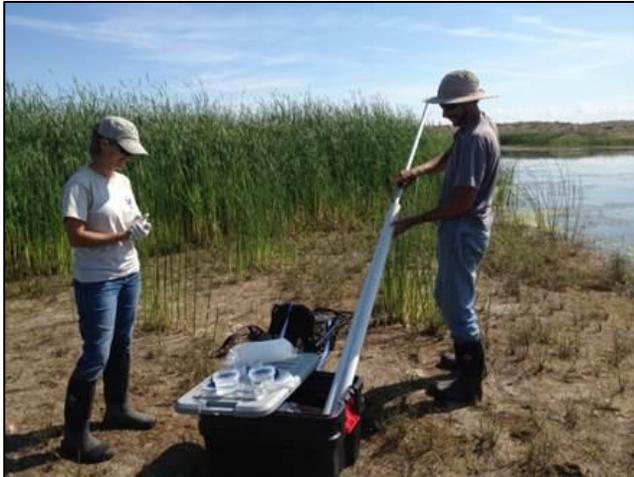
Pygmy rabbit kit with small cyst on stomach and growth in the eye – Photos taken 7/15/2015

Multiple bot flies in the back end of a captured kit – Photo taken 7/15/2015

Northern Leopard Frogs: Biologists E. Duvuvuei, Finger, and O. Duvuvuei continued the eDNA sampling effort for northern leopard frogs and Chytrids fungus in the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area (NLFMA) and 37 northern leopard frogs were observed. The purpose of this sampling is to determine the presence/abundance of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (commonly known as chytrids fungus) in the NLFMA in



order to compare disease status at the potential release areas. Samples from the potential release sites will be collected next week. In addition to sampling for Chytrids fungus at the release sites, eDNA could indicate if northern leopard frogs are present in the areas but have gone undetected by biologists. Finger continued to work with contracts folks internally and with WSU to get the contract amendment finalized. Upon learning that we will not be charged overhead, Finger was able to produce additional sampling locations to enhance our distribution within the NLFMA.



Biologists E. Duvuvuei and Finger prepare to collect eDNA at a pond in the NLFMA – precautions must be taken to avoid sample contamination. PVC tubes store bleach solution and rinse water for decontamination of the dipping pole.



Pouring a water sample into a transport vessel for filtration back at the office



Biologists E. Duvuvuei and Finger sampling a particularly challenging pond within the NLFMA – Photos by O. Duvuvuei

Grizzly Bear Surveys: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen prepared, organized, and delivered supplies for back country survey sites to the Hidden Lakes Cabin in the Pasayten Wilderness. This coming week, USFS and NGO staff will lead Wenatchee River Institute course participants in the deployment of hair-snares/camera survey sites in the middle portion of the wilderness. This

is part of a continuing interagency effort to gather data on grizzly bear presence in the North Cascades Ecosystem. In addition, these surveys frequently yield detections of other rare carnivores including lynx, wolves, and wolverines. Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen will be assisting with the check and take down of these sites in the late summer and early fall. Many thanks to Officer McCormick for providing horse support for the multi-species back country excursion. We would not have accomplished as much or completed tasks anywhere near as efficiently without help from Troy and his rookie wrangling assistant, Biologist Fortier.

Water stop on the long trek into the Pasayten

Wilderness – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Common Loon Surveys: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen surveyed the Hidden Lakes chain in the Pasayten Wilderness for breeding loon activity. We documented a



foraging adult common loon on Big Hidden Lake. Although no chicks were seen, this observation, along with several other credible reports of loons on these lakes during breeding/rearing season the last few years, strongly suggests that this area supports at least one breeding loon pair. This is the first complete survey of the Hidden Lakes chain in over a decade. Our intention is to get back into this site more regularly in the years to come.



Adult common loon, Big Hidden Lake – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wolverine Research: Biologist Fitkin and a USFS contract biologist deployed three wolverine summer camera survey stations in the Western Pasayten Wilderness in areas with known wolverine home ranges. This is part of a multi-year effort to develop and test a practical and successful summer monitoring technique for this elusive mustelid. Sites will be checked and monitored throughout the summer and early fall, and set up for long-term deployment over winter.



The joys of field work (applying the rotted blood/fish wolverine attractant) – Photo by WDFW

Wildlife Areas

Chiliwist Post-Carlton Complex

Seeding Assessment: Manager Haug and Assistant Manager Wehmeyer surveyed a six acre sling-seeded area within the Carlton Complex Fire on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area. The area seeded in December 2014 was an area identified as ‘severely burned’ by the USDA’s Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program. Haug and Wehmeyer used a mix of native grass seed provided by the Bureau of Land Management and broadcasted the seed by hand over area

on top of 2-3” of snow (see picture below). Results of the survey were mixed. Native grass seed broadcasted on site did germinate but not at a significant rate. Native pioneer species such as fireweed quickly inhabited the area, as well as various other forbs, shrubs, and native grasses. This quick assessment doesn’t resolve the issue of whether continued seeding of these areas following the fire would be worth the financial resources needed. More information is needed.





Top left – Assistant Manager Wehmeyer seeding the area on December 2014. Top right - Wehmeyer assessing success of the broadcast seeding through a thick stand of fireweed and other native forbs. Left – A diverse mix of native species recovering after the Carlton Complex Fire: pinegrass, fireweed, goldenrod, aspen and silky lupine – Photos by Justin Haug

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement

(SAFE): Biologist Comstock, Biologist Braaten and Supervisor Cotton met regarding SAFE fields that need to have their plans re-written due to field failures. During the meeting, the team discussed SAFE re-write protocols and the best methods to notify operators that their fields need to be redone. Private Lands Biologist Braaten looked at several SAFE fields this week. Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with Manager Cotton and PL Biologist Comstock to discuss SAFE Contract rewrites, FSA coordination, and SAFE CRP take out methods that worked and didn't. Private Lands Biologist Braaten also discussed similar solutions about Lincoln County SAFE issues with PL Biologist Baarstad this week.



SAFE CRP field – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW

Environmental Quality Incentives

Program (EQIP): Biologist Comstock and Supervisor Cotton met with Gretchen Fitzgerald to visit EQIP sites to be seeded this fall. They made a tour of three sites that will be planted with nesting cover and pollinator habitat this year. They all need significant site prep before they will be ready to be planted in the fall. Biologist Comstock created maps of all the sites and began the process of coordinating with Gretchen Fitzgerald on planting orders and logistics.



Weedy strip along irrigation ditch that will be converted to shrubs this fall

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

Wildlife Areas

Okanogan Lands Operations Meeting: Manager Haug and Assistant Manager Wehmeyer attended the Okanogan Lands Operations meeting in Okanogan. The meeting brought together the wildlife area managers, assistant managers, and Access and Fuels Specialist Leuschen to discuss any land management concerns or issues that need addressing. The gathering was put together by Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Swedberg. Local media authority Becki Andrist also attended the meeting to give us her take and how we as agency staff can begin to turn the tide of public opinion in this county to a more favorable position. Some good ideas were presented and continuing our effort to become more visible using uniforms and vehicle decals is a good start.

FEMA/Carlton Complex: Manager Furnari made three maps of the Fraser Creek Unit, since there are 21 different neighbors surrounding that fence replacement project. She labeled neighbors names next to their parcels, along with their mailing address and any phone numbers (if any were known). She sent info to CAMP and printed out copies to give to Pre-Construction attendees. The next day, she attended the Pre-Construction meeting with Scott Allen, Dale Swedberg, the winning bidders, and their subcontractor. They drove around to various locations of the Fraser Creek fence to look for accessible entrance points. Afterwards, she and Mr. Allen drove near the northwestern corner to jump the fence and hike in to GPS/record burned interior fences near two cattle watering points. They then stopped by the burned house to look for the septic tank (still didn't find) and they noted the now exposed well casing containing water that is scheduled to be properly capped by a contractor. She downloaded the GPS points and photos, and began working on CAMP/GIS tech material. It has not been completed yet.



Chukar partridge broods– Douglas County –
Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Female spruce grouse – Photo by Scott Fitkin



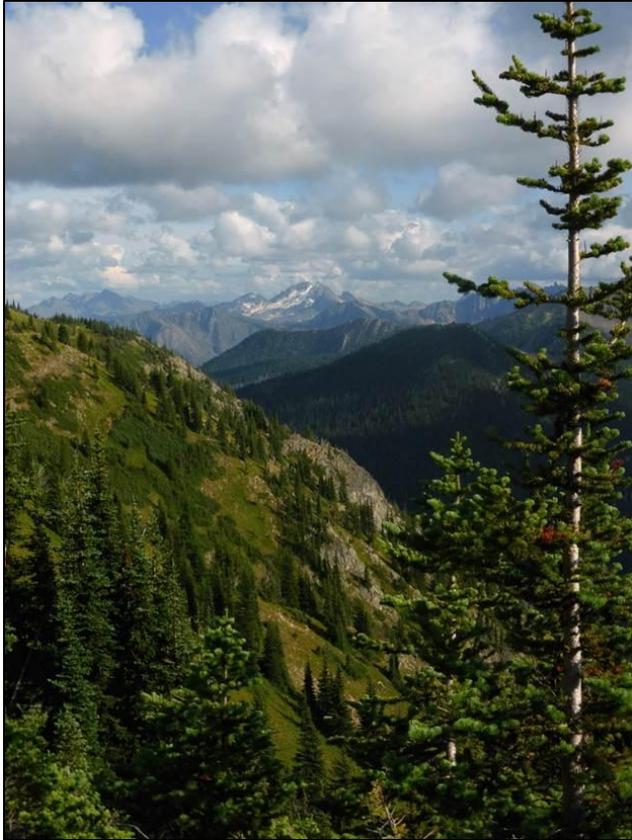
Spruce grouse chick – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Cougar Lake, Pasayten Wilderness – Photo by Scott Fitkin



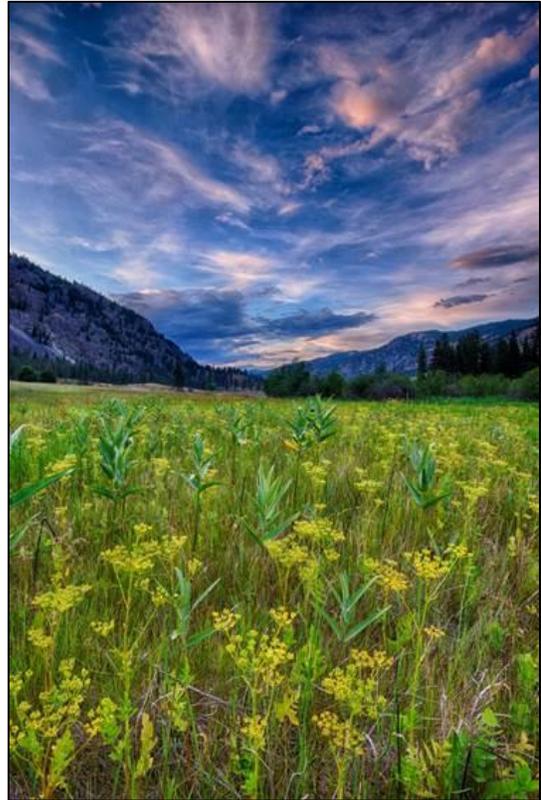
Young mountain goat at Dead Horse Point
– Photo by Scott Fitkin



Wolverine country along the Pacific Crest Trail – Photo by Scott Fitkin



From Top to Bottom – A female Rufous Hummingbird on Chiliwist Butte, a Great Blue Heron along Sinlahekin Creek near the HQ bridge, a Ruffed Grouse in an aspen thicket on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area, a preliminary attempt at astrophotography on the Sinlahekin, and creekside meadow at sunset near Connors Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman began to research and set up a protocol to monitor snags created during the Oak Creek Timber Sale. Huffman modified a project done by the Forest Service and developed a data sheet to record information. A sample of snags created during the project will be monitored for wildlife use and longevity. Different methods of snag creation will also be monitored.

Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey looked for a location to set up a photo point to monitor the timber sale in Section 5. A site was located south of the area and a pre-thinning photo point was taken. The landscape scale photo point will be monitoring pre- and post-thinning every few years thereafter to track changes to the area.

Forester Mackey taking pre thinning photos of Section 5 of the Oak Creek Timber Sale



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Sunnyside staff traveled to the site of the most recent fire at the I-82 Ponds Unit to evaluate the damage and discuss rehabilitation efforts as a group. Staff from the Sunnyside HQ Unit will be returning to collect data for restoration planning.

Mesa Lake Unit Fire: Manager Bjornstrom met with staff from BFI Native Seed at the site of the Mesa Lake Unit fire to discuss rehabilitation options, costs, and availability of BFI staff to implement the rehabilitation efforts. BFI is to provide a bid on the work soon.

Duck Banding: Manager Bjornstrom coordinated duck banding efforts on the wildlife area with District Biologist Fidorra.

Noxious Weed Spray: Assistant Manager Sak coordinated with staff from the Yakima County Weed Control Board in setting up a work plan to spray for noxious weeds along the Yakima River from Wapato Dam to Hwy 241 Bridge, beginning in August. NRW2 Nnanabu will assist with weed control efforts funded by a grant acquired by Dave Heimer. The Yakama Nation will also contribute personnel to the effort.

Wildlife Management

Mourning Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra conducted mourning dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery one day this week. Hatchery Specialist Roberts assisted with baiting efforts. The total amount of mourning doves newly banded in District 4 this year is currently at 114. This includes 18 AHY (4F,13M,1U), 95 HY, and one of unknown age. Dove banding will continue through August 15.

Grant County Bat Monitoring Project: District Biologist Fidorra deployed two bat detectors for the WDFW Bat Monitoring project in Grant County. This second round of surveys will continue through July with the third and final round conducted in August.

Waterfowl Habitat Enhancement: District Biologist Fidorra met with the General Manager of Barker Ranch to discuss waterfowl habitat enhancement on this large private tract bordering the Yakima River. A tour of the property was conducted and topics discussed included moist soil management, invasive plant removal, and game management. The Barker Ranch has partnered with WDFW in the past to conduct species monitoring and research and future collaborations are likely.

Nesting Raptors Interview: District Biologist Fidorra agreed to a request for an interview from NBC/KNDU-Tri-Cities related to nesting raptors in the area. Fidorra provided information related to ecology and wildlife laws, and attempted to ease apparent concern regarding the risk of bird attacks on people, which was brought up in several of the interviewer's questions.

GIS Data Request: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with Biologist Blatz in response to a data request for species occurrence data from USFWS related to a recent wildfire on the Hanford Reach National Monument. The GIS data was provided to USFWS in a timely manner.

Sturgeon Mortality Event: District Biologist Fidorra received and resolved several calls from the public related to the large numbers of dead sturgeon in the area. Callers were glad to hear that we were aware of and responding to the mortality event. Sightings were sent to Fish Biologist Hoffarth.

Kennewick Animal Control Call: District Biologist Fidorra spent considerable time responding to a call from Kennewick Animal Control stating that a party had brought in a small coyote pup mistaken for a dog. The party was eventually contacted and willing to give up the animal. Rehabilitation options were investigated but none presented themselves. Fidorra contacted Enforcement Sargent Fulton who agreed to retrieve the animal, but upon receiving photos both Fidorra and Fulton agreed the animal was, in fact, a dog.

EQIP Program Update: Biologist Stutzman contacted a few landowners about the EQIP program in advance of the July 17 deadline. Despite the deadline predictably being moved back a few months, Stutzman did have one landowner sign up for a wildlife planting in Yakima County. Stutzman met with the landowner to take the application and discuss the design and location of the project.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz trapped doves in Union Gap most of the week, with limited success. It's unknown where mourning doves went, but hawk activity likely dispersed the birds. A total of ~35 new bands were put out. The annual total is now 142, with 57 adults and 85 Hatch-year birds banded. Eurasian collared doves appeared in large numbers this week. An estimated 300 collared doves were in the wheat field every afternoon. Prior to cutting last week, few collared doves were observed. Eurasian collared doves are largely diurnal (day active), while mourning doves are strongly crepuscular (dawn and dusk active).



Forty-five collared doves waiting in the bleachers on the edge of a wheat field

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Bernatowicz checked tubes on two transects, finding no western gray squirrels and minimal small mammal hair. All hair collected this year was sent to Olympia for identification.

Mule Deer: Muckleshoot (MIT) biologists responded to a radio collared deer mortality in the Taneum drainage. Cougar predation was the cause of death. Biologist Bernatowicz also corresponded with MIT biologist Vales about 3-point minimum regulations. Biologist Vales is currently reviewing age/antler point data.

State Wildlife Action Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed the update and provided information on badger to Biologist Lewis.

Bighorn Sheep Data Collection: Moore volunteered to collect bighorn sheep telemetry data from each bighorn sheep manager that has populations associated with or in close proximity to the Wenatchee Okanogan National Forest. These data will be sent to the Forest Service to be

analyzed using a Risk of Contact Model. Moore completed edits for all bighorn sheep populations in District 8, assisted with edits for District 6, and consulted with District 7 on editing their bighorn sheep population data. Moore continued work with the Bighorn Sheep Risk of Contact Modeling. He performed some preliminary analysis on a few populations within District 8.

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

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman checked the trail that accesses the Royal Columns climbing area, finding the trail in good shape with repairs made by volunteer last year holding up well. Huffman also found that someone had pulled down the “Trail Closed” sign and fencing blocking the old access to the climbing area. Huffman reinstalled the sign and put the fencing back in place.

Access Program: 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.

NRW2 Barbosa led volunteers over the weekend as they brushed, pulled weeds, picked up trash, and painted over graffiti at our lower valley access sites.

Lower Valley Volunteer Clean-up

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



Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Damage Inspections: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent the majority of the week working with wheat producers and crop adjusters inspecting and documenting elk damage to winter wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain. Although elk damage was present in most all of the fields visited, damage was greatly reduced from historic levels. Some of the damage observed included trailing, bedding, and foraging.



Elk bed in winter wheat



Two elk calves along Hanford's southern boundary

Elk Damage Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received an elk damage complaint from an irrigated tree fruit producer near Prosser. The area had several hazing patrols conducted recently, but on one night 20+ elk caused severe damage to a section of high value Fuji apple crop. A request for a crop damage claim packet was received and coordination with a crop adjuster was initiated. An LP gas cannon was deployed and more hazing is planned.



Deployed LP gas cannon

Reported Elk In Hay: Conflict Specialist Wetzel had numerous reports from hay producers in the Park Creek area that mentioned elk in hay. The upper range is extremely dry and stock water is becoming limited. One elk was removed at Park Creek by a landowner's representative and donated to the local food bank.

Injured Deer: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by a party that saw a wounded deer along the highway at Bristol Flats. They reported that the deer had a broken leg and was being attacked by a coyote along the highway. A visit to the area found the deer and coyote. The deer had a broken rear leg but was still able to move well enough to leave the area so no action was taken.



Deer with broken leg moving away from highway

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

Wenas Wildlife Area: All ambulatory Murray staff worked to remove old fencing between the Watt stack yard and the public parking lot. A local contractor was hired to install new chain-link fence along this section to improve security. New posts were installed Tuesday and wire was hung on Friday.

Manastash Sheep Grazing Permit: Manager Winegeart finalized the 2015 Manastash sheep grazing permit and sent it off for signatures. The document was finalized internally and mailed to the permittee for a signature Friday. Winegeart coordinated with both the permittee and the USFS range rider Carla Jaeger regarding livestock, estimated time of arrival on WDFW lands, and 2015 stocking numbers.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Taylor responded to a fire on Clemans Mountain, a holdover from a lightning storm. It was just over the line into a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) section and quickly contained by DNR fire.

Black Canyon Spraying: Wenas staff sprayed in Black Canyon for two days targeting musk and Canada thistle and knapweed. They found five large rattlesnakes around the water trough that appeared to be eating well. The lack of water has everything coming to the trough. Staff also backpack-sprayed Lemon Canyon, starting at the top of the drainage and spraying their way out to the bottom.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Forester Mackey continued with contract compliance and tracked log loads to the mill. Mackey worked on contract modification to allow for log load delivery to a new location at the mill's request. With moderating temperatures and the IFPL staying at three, Mackey is working with the contractor to get equipment back into the woods to continue thinning operations.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Herd Management: Biologist Yarborough attended the North Cascades elk herd technical group meeting. The group worked on population estimates analysis and discussed fencing issues for private landowners.

USFWS Detectability Marine Waterfowl Surveys: District 13 staff completed data transcription and review, and submitted the data to the USFWS who will analyze it against digital images taken concurrently. USFWS utilized WDFW expertise in documenting detectability using high-speed digital imagery to determine the feasibility of USFWS performing detectability analyses for their surveys across the continent to refine their datasets. For this survey the USFWS is assessing the potential for using crowdsourcing for digital image interpretation.

Lowland Pika Surveys: District 13 staff retrieved monitoring equipment and surveyed new and known locations for pika presence. No pika detections were obtained from the monitored area, but a visual pika detection was obtained in a newly surveyed talus near the monitored area. A known location was surveyed with multiple audio and visual detections obtained.



Pika at a lowland site in the Stillaguamish Valley



Here is the location of the new pika sighting. Habitat appears similar to traditionally described pika habitat.

WDFW Growth Management Act Wildlife Code Consultation: Biologist Anderson phone conferenced with senior planning staff at the Seattle Department of Planning and Development regarding updates to wildlife consideration language in their city code. Anderson provided thoughts, suggestions, and interpretation of WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations. A draft update will be produced and sent back to Anderson for review and comment. More on WDFW collaboration regarding wildlife consideration at local regulatory levels can be found at the WDFW Priority Habitat and Species website:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Pileated woodpecker feeding young in Golden Gardens – a WDFW Priority Species recommended for management consideration – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW



Common Loon Nesting and Fledge Status: Biologist Anderson confirmed a three day old chick at Calligan Lake.

Anderson also spent time to confirm juvenile status of a Rattlesnake bird. Plumage indicates the case. It appears we have had nesting on that lake this year. Follow-up surveys in future years will expand on the use and knowledge of this new territory.



Adult Common Loon pair and three day chick at Calligan Lake – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW



Juvenile Common Loon at Rattlesnake Lake – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW

Wildlife Area

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

Wildlife Management

Band-Tailed Pigeon Mineral Springs Survey: Biologist DeBruyn did the last mineral spring survey in the district for the year. Low water levels at this spring near the Canadian border actually facilitated the survey as the birds were less spread out than usual and easier to count.



Young Band-tail in low light

Camp Moran Presentation: Biologist Milner joined Enforcement Officers Peters, Stout, and Downes to give a presentation to 60 girls aged 12-16 at Camp Moran on Orcas Island. The camp provides young women with a variety of outdoor experiences, including covering the concepts of hunter education. We discussed the basics of wildlife management, what it takes to become a wildlife biologist, basic hunter ethics and enforcement programs, what it takes to become an enforcement officer, and fielded a wide variety of questions. Our message to these young women is to get outdoors, stay healthy, get a good education, and pursue the things you are passionate about as you move into adulthood.

Black-tailed Deer fibromatosis: Biologist Anderson corresponded with King County staff regarding a hit-by-car deer with severe fibromatosis (papilloma virus – warts). Reports of deer come in annually regarding this affliction. It does not affect meat but is unsightly and may lead to secondary health effects in deer in very severe cases. For more information, visit http://dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/health_program/fibromatosis/index.asp

Hit by car deer with fibromas –
Photo by King County

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit:

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the free truckloads of wood mulch continue to roll in. Volunteer Mark Ryder is coordinating the effort. The mulch will be used to improve

the interior trail system in the unit. Manager Boehm also met with a Boy Scout to advance an Eagle Scout project that will provide interior trail signage for the unit.



3D Archery Contest: The Custer Sportsmen’s Club hosted a 3D Archery Contest on the Intalco Unit’s archery range. The event was well attended due to the good weather.

Region 4 Pheasant Hunting Public Meeting: Manager Kessler attended the Region 4 public pheasant hunting status meeting in Mount Vernon. Kessler provided updated information on pheasant hunting opportunities on units of the Whatcom Wildlife Area.



Corn, fava beans and barley in Lorenzen field on the Island Unit

Island Unit: The photo to the right shows the Lorenzen field on the Island Unit, planted with corn, fava beans, and barley. In the back right is a large area of bare soil that has been reed canary grass for the last 5+ years. Dry conditions allowed for disking and chisel plowing, and the area has begun to sprout with millet and smartweed.

Private Lands/Access Management

Habitat Management: Natural Resource Technician Otto mowed several of the sites enrolled in Region 4’s Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program. The team also discussed ideas for future habitat management at this site.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Biologist Hans contacted landowners to inquire about enrollment for this upcoming season. The landowners confirmed they would like to continue with the program and Biologist Hans created their contract in Novatus. She will be meeting with the landowners in a couple of weeks to obtain signatures and answer any questions.

Whidbey Island Deer Hunt and Diversity Sites: Biologist Hans followed up with the representative from the Whidbey Camano Land Trust to finalize details for an existing diversity and deer hunt site, in addition to a new diversity site on Whidbey Island.

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

Wildlife Management

Bear Relocation: Biologists Caldwell and DeBruyn assisted with the relocation of a black bear mount from Mill Creek to Newhalem. The bear will be part of the outreach effort by USFWS and the National Park Service.



Biologist DeBruyn and friend

Private Lands/Access Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman continues to field numerous calls from landowners around the Anacortes area that are experiencing deer depredations on small orchards and landscaping plants. Consultation and site assessment has been provided to several of the landowners. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal met with a landowner experiencing elk damage in the Birdsvew area of Skagit County. The property was surveyed for damage and fence redesign was discussed with the landowner. The landowner was open to further discussion and implementing additional fencing to exclude elk from the property. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal met with a landowner in the Acme area to finalize dates for fence installation on a small kiwi orchard that has experienced elk damage. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal monitored elk activity on agricultural crops in Skagit County. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call from a landowner in Skagit County that has elk traveling through a bean and potato field. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to the area and began an assessment on preventative measures that can be taken. The beans are expected to be harvested within the next 20 days.

Elk Technical Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman attended the elk technical group meeting with co-managers. The meeting agenda included an elk survey data update, herd plan update, and discussions on addressing elk damage in Skagit County.

Wolf Training: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Conflict Supervisor Caldwell attended wolf training in Wenatchee. The training highlighted the ethics and responsibilities involved with wolf monitoring.

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. Master Hunter volunteers are currently assisting with a parking lot monitoring project on the four pheasant release sites.

Spencer Island: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with a long-term volunteer to discuss and coordinate a trail clearing volunteer work force. With three Eagle Scout projects scheduled for the unit, adult volunteers are needed to clear the trail and project work areas, where benches and native vegetation are planned for installation. The benches will be dispersed throughout the unit and be available for bird watching and incorporated into temporary duck blinds for waterfowl hunters.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Women Only Classes with All Female Instructor Team: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey started work to assemble an all-female instructor team to offer women only hunter education classes. The goal is to have the team together by next year and offer classes in the King County area. If successful, all female teams in other areas will be developed. It is felt that this may make the hunter safety classes attractive to female students and present a role model to women who comprise a fast growing segment of our students.

Master Hunter: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted master hunters to find volunteer work that will benefit the department. Master hunters were recruited to assist at the Enumclaw fair, where, due to their involvement, money will be raised to purchase elk collars. Dazey also attend the Master Hunter Advisory Group meeting held in Ellensburg, representing Region 4 and the department.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Site Survey: Biologists George and Stephens completed two surveys of band-tailed pigeon use at mineral sites on the Kalama River and the Green River. A total of 15 mineral sites are surveyed in western Washington annually. The mineral site survey was developed to index the abundance of the Pacific Coast populations of band-tailed pigeons. This year, survey conditions were good and pigeon use was at or above average. Biologist Stephens had a visit from a curious mink while conducting the Kalama River survey. This mink and its family members were observed foraging for fish in the river and playfully wrestling with each other on the bank during the survey.

Curious mink during the Kalama River band-tailed pigeon survey



Western Pond Turtle Trapping:

Biologists Bergh, Anderson, Doorly, and Johnson, as well as WSU veterinary student Iredale, participated in this week's western pond turtle trapping at the Sondino site. This week's effort was to capture turtles for both treatment of shell disease at the Oregon Zoo and Iredale's study on bone density and morphology as it relates to shell disease. Eleven turtles were sent to the zoo for treatment by Dr. Storms. Three turtles were sent to WSU to get radiographs, CT scans, and DXA (bone density) scans as part of the investigation into the cause of shell disease.



Biologists Bergh and Johnson pulling western pond turtle traps



Veterinary student Iredale with a turtle

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Haul Road Restoration: Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit with Lindsay Cornelius of the Columbia Land Trust (CLT) to review progress on the haul road restoration project along the Klickitat River and to discuss a variety of wildlife issues associated with this project. The CLT secured funding for the project and has done an outstanding job at coordinating all aspects of this work with the appropriate agencies, tribal biologists, and local communities. Although this project was funded primarily for salmon habitat restoration on the Klickitat River, the end result will be a benefit for a multitude of wildlife species associated with the riparian restoration project. This multi-year project is in the final phase of restoration with the majority of work expected to be completed within the next year.



Contractors removing asphalt and old road bed



Habitat restoration following road removal

Annual Region PR Reports: Region 5 biologists have started work on the annual Pittman-Robertson (PR) report for mountain goats, elk, and deer management in Region 5. The report summarizes activities related to each species, including hunter harvest, season structure, survey efforts, research projects, habitat enhancements, population estimates, 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 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

Access Sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes continued to respond to high use at access sites and removed 400 pounds of trash as well as tires this week.

Items left at access sites



Rowland Lake: While cleaning the facilities at Rowland Lake and spraying over graffiti in the restroom, Access Manger Spangler observed damaged/dead trees around the area. Beetle damage could be a possibility.



Damaged trees at Rowland Lake

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Conklin continues to work with an organic farm in Morton that is reporting heavy damage from deer even though they have protected their gardens with electric fencing.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management:

Thurston County Prairie/Oak Habitat Conservation Plan: Biologist Tirhi represented District 11 and joined WDFW Headquarters, Thurston County, CNLM, USFWS staff, and Thurston County's consulting firm to review draft species and habitat management guidelines, management areas for oak and prairie habitat, and several oak/prairie obligate species as part of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) finalization for Thurston County. The following species were reviewed:

Covered Species & Habitats

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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Oak Woodland HABITAT </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western gray squirrel • Slender-billed White-breasted nuthatch | <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Spotted Frog HABITAT </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon Spotted Frog | <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Prairie/Grassland HABITAT </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streaked Horned Lark • Mazama Pocket Gopher • Vesper Sparrow • Prairie butterflies • Golden paintbrush |
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The biological goals of the HCP are to:

1. Avoid or minimize adverse effects on the HCP species and habitats from HCP authorized activities.
2. Compensate for unavoidable impacts to the HCP species by identifying, conserving, and improving important habitat areas within a network of reserves.
3. Minimize adverse effects to the HCP species and habitats through local outreach and engagement that promotes community awareness, engagement, and support for HCP species and habitat conservation.

Avian Protection Plan: Biologist Ament has been working with the Clallam County PUD to help develop an Avian Protection Plan. Discussions were initiated due to the electrocution of several trumpeter swans and bald eagles in the Sequim/Dungeness area in recent years. This will be a utility-specific program designed to reduce the operational and avian risks resulting from avian contact with electric utility facilities. The local PUD is committed to balancing its goal of providing reliable electrical service in a cost-effective manner with regulatory requirements protecting avian species, as well as the need to obtain and comply with all necessary permits, monitor incidents of avian mortality, and make reasonable efforts to construct and alter infrastructure to reduce the incidence of avian mortality. The document outlines the district's Avian Protection Plan to reduce avian injuries and mortality along with improving electrical

reliability to customers. Biologist Ament plans to review the draft document and work closely with PUD staff to produce a finalized plan.

Band-tailed pigeon surveys: District 11 completed two band-tailed pigeon mineral site surveys. Mineral site surveys were developed specifically to index band-tailed pigeon abundance throughout their Pacific Coast range and are conducted annually in July. Counts this year recorded record high numbers of birds visiting a given mineral site. For example, the Oyster Bay site totaled 399 birds arriving and 474 birds leaving. In 2014, the totals for this site were 159 birds arriving and 192 birds leaving.

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

Public Use on Lands Adjacent to Scatter Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Belson contacted the land manager for the Port Blakely tract adjacent to the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area to discuss public access and recreational use issues relating to horseback riding. The Wildlife Area is a popular trailhead for riders to access an extensive network of trails on nearby private timberlands, but information available to the public through WDFW regarding the differences in regulations between the two ownerships is incomplete. The two managers met onsite to inspect information posted at key locations. Needed improvements were identified for boundary signage and the kiosk display, including the posting of seasonal Port Blakely closures (which are currently in place) on the Wildlife Area kiosk. Manager Belson will also coordinate with IT to ensure that the Wildlife Area webpage accurately reflects updates made in the field.



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

Elk Damage: For several years now a producer has been leasing lands in the Wynoochee Valley and growing organic green beans. Many have wondered when the elk were going to discover them. Well this year they did. Biologist Harris was contacted by an employee of the producer stating that the elk has ruined the crop. Apparently no one had checked one of the fields for quite some time. The employee asked about filing a claim and Biologist Harris informed him that this is the first contact they have made to WDFW so there is no DPCA. He explained the requirements and nonlethal measures that would be involved with a DPCA. While he may be able to help on some fields, the fields that got wiped out are owned by a landholder who has spoken to Biologist Harris before and he was very clear that he would not allow any public access and felt he should just get handfuls of permits. Needless to say he was informed WDFW cannot help him. Hopefully the other fields will not receive as much damage.



This field should be green with plants about 6" high



Most plants clipped. Note heavy use indicated by elk tracks.

Biologist Harris spoke to another producer in the Wynoochee Valley. The elk have started coming back and have lots of calves. The producer asked if it was okay if he gave some of his Damage Prevention Permits to Youth Outdoors Unlimited. This is a non-profit organization that takes youth who are diagnosed with life threatening illness or physical disability that have a wish to go hunting.

Outreach: Conflict Specialist Blankenship was invited by the North Rainier Elk Foundation to give a presentation to a local group of Sportsman in Enumclaw. Blankenship covered topics including wildlife conflict in the area, regulation changes in the area, the master hunter program, and volunteering for WDFW.

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

Training: Biologists Novack, Harris, and Belson attended training on Contracts and Budgets sponsored by the Region 6 Habitat Program. Our thanks go out to our Habitat Program partners for making this opportunity available.