

# Wildlife Program

Week of October 5 – October 11, 2015

## **WOLF ACTIVITIES**

### **Region 1 Wolf Activities**

**Dirty Shirt Pack Area:** Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted the producer in the North Fork Chewelah Creek US Forest Service (USFS) allotment. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman conducted one last night patrol in the North Fork Chewelah Creek USFS allotment. Cattle were completely removed from the allotment.

**Producer Contacts:** Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted the producer in the West Branch of LeClerc Creek in Pend Oreille County and discussed wolves, depredations, data sharing, and next grazing season. Biologist Shepherd contacted other livestock producers in Stevens and Ferry counties concerning wolf issues and cost share contract payments.

**Cattle Depredations:** Natural Resource Worker Weatherman completed and submitted two depredation investigation reports.

**Range Rider Contacts:** Range riders were present in the North Fork Chewelah Creek and other USFS allotments. Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted range riders in the North Fork Chewelah Creek and other allotments.

**Huckleberry Wolf Pack Area Producer Meeting:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Wildlife Technician Bendixen met with a livestock producer that recently found wolf scat amongst his cattle. A Wolf Collar Data Sharing Agreement was signed and sent to Olympia staff for login credentials. Bendixen and Bennett also picked up a lamb carcass from another producer in the area that had died of natural causes.

**District One Wolf Coordination Meeting:** Supervisor McCanna assembled an agenda and sent to acting Program Manager Becker for review. The first wolf coordination meeting will be held in Colville on October 12.

**Monthly Wolf Conference Call:** Supervisor McCanna and Region 1 Wildlife Conflict staff participated on the monthly wolf conference call. All appears to be quiet at this time, with the majority of producers moving cattle off grazing allotments in higher elevations.

**Wolf-Livestock Lecture in Spokane:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett presented information about Washington management and historic livestock depredations in Washington due to wolves. This lecture followed a field tour of a producer previously affected by wolves from last week.

**OR 14 Wolf:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received a photo of some wolf tracks on Bennett Lumbers land on Cahill Mountain. The hunter said the wolf appeared to be alone and OR 14 was in the same area at the same time.

*Wolf tracks on Cahill Mountain*

**WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

**GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT  
NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE**



**State Wildlife Action Plan:** The final draft of the State Wildlife Action Plan was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 29. This document is an update of our 2005 Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and describes our state's Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Habitats of Conservation Need, and associated conservation needs and strategies. Lynn Helbrecht was the project manager and a multitude of staff throughout the Wildlife, Habitat, and Fish programs contributed to this significant body of work.

**Farm Bill Coordination with Partners:** Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel, Cynthia Wilkerson (Section Manager, Wildlife Diversity Division), and Jeff Davis (Assistant Director, Habitat Program) met with Mark Clark (Executive Director, State Conservation Commission) and Ron Schultz (Director of Policy and Inter-Governmental Relations, State Conservation Commission). They discussed Mike's role representing WDFW on the State Conservation Commission, opportunities to partner with the State Conservation Commission and Conservation Districts, WDFW's ongoing update to the Priority Habitats and Species riparian guidance document, and the current reform effort around the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. Mike coordinated with Rod Hamilton of the Farm Service Agency to schedule a meeting to talk about Farm Bill Programs funded by the Farm Service Agency. He submitted paperwork to the Recreation and Conservation Office to represent WDFW on the Farmlands Conservation Committee of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

**Butterflies:** Ann Potter, Wildlife Diversity Division Insect Conservation Specialist, participated in the second meeting of the Taylor's Checkerspot Recovery Team. In preparation for developing downlisting and delisting criteria, the recovery team discussed the risk of extinction, the distribution and connectivity of current or potential future checkerspot sites, the number and location of genetically distinct units, and key threats to be addressed in the recovery plan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced they will complete a *Species Status Assessment Framework*, a new requirement for federal recovery plans. Ann developed and shared a document examining the approach to recovery used for Fender's blue butterfly, a Willamette Valley prairie species.

**Land Acquisition:** Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson and Deputy Director Joe Stohr attended a stakeholder roundtable discussion on the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program hosted

by consultants working for the Recreation and Conservation Office. The Recreation and Conservation Office was directed via budget proviso to review the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and deliver a report to the legislature by December 2015. The meeting was attended by recreation, conservation, and local government stakeholders.

## **REGION 1**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Bighorn Disease and Necropsy Training:** Wildlife biologists from all three Region 1 districts participated in a bighorn sheep disease and necropsy refresher in Ellensburg. The class was organized by Section Manager Rich Harris and Wildlife Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield. The class reviewed diseases of bighorn sheep and included a field necropsy of a domestic sheep. Biological sample collection and shipping protocols were also reviewed.



***Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield teaching necropsy techniques to WDFW staff at a training workshop on bighorn sheep diseases***

#### **Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites**

**SCWA Graves Mountain Fire:** Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Jerry “Chris” Christensen were finally able to visit the westernmost satellite parcel of the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area, which the Graves Mountain Fire burned across in August 2015. The property fared very well as, according to Natural Resource Technician Christensen, prescribed fire treatments have been conducted, in cooperation with the Colville National Forest, a few times in this area since the 1960s. This recent fire occurrence acted like a prescribed burn in the area, providing a nice under burn and thinning small pockets of young, overstocked trees. According to a Forest Service fire crew member that was in that area when the fire passed through, even with 20 mph winds, the fire just crept slowly and stayed on the ground. This 65 acre parcel lies on a hillside that is mostly open with forested portions. Christensen and Palmer observed a large flock of turkeys on the property as well.

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

**Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict**

**No Crop Damage Claims in Blue Mountains for 2015:**

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley passed along that for the fourth year in over 60 years and first in the past five years WDFW did not have one game damage claim in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, or Asotin counties in the Blue Mountain District. This is directly related to all the long hours and hard work, including hazing, landowner meetings, coordinating damage deer and elk hunts, and new landowner DPCAs, including Lure Crops, which was coordinated by Biologist Earl, Technician Wade, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley.



**REGION 2**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Wolverine Monitoring Research:** Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer checked a set of wolverine camera stations and modified three of the sites for long-term winter monitoring. Winter modifications included the deployment of automatic pumps that will dispense a small amount of scent attractant daily for several months without servicing. The new technology was developed by the project lead Dr. Robert Long, in collaboration with Microsoft engineers. This is all part of a three year research effort to develop a reliable technique for monitoring wolverine status and distribution in all seasons, and it may have application for other rare carnivores. Over our last deployment interval, our cameras documented several species, but lynx was the only rare carnivore represented. Other cameras deployed by the crew operating further west in North Cascades National Park picked up not only our radio-marked wolverine Special K, but also photographed the collared disperser wolf from the Teanaway Pack.



*Rare Methow goat-deer or a mule deer with a cutaneous fibroma* – Photo by remote camera



*Black bear and cub* – Photo by remote camera



*Lynx* – Photo by remote camera



*Wolverine (Special K)* – Photo by remote camera



*Teaway pack dispersing wolf* – Photo by remote camera

**Mountain Goat Survey:** Biologist Heinlen observed five mountain goats (one kid, two adult nannies, and two unknown adults) in the Chopaka Mountain herd. This is the same number of mountain goats Biologist Heinlen observed this past March in the same area, and roughly the same number that have been observed annually for several years now.



***Mountain goat on Chopaka Mountain*** – Photo by Jeff Heinlen

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery Capture/Release Activities:** Technicians Annanie and Gaston built a fourth funnel trap at the Sagebrush Flat breeding enclosure to cover a portion of the enclosure not yet targeted and adjusted the length and widened another that was not functioning effectively the way it was. Technician Gibbs and Gaston made repairs to remaining drive fences as the high winds in the area cause tears, and rabbits often dig holes under them.



There was one trapping event this week. On Saturday, Biologist Wisniewski and Technicians Gibbs and Satterwhite were joined by TA Meghan Camp and 15 students from WSU's *Methods in Wildlife Ecology* class at Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. Despite very windy conditions keeping rabbits in their burrows, we were able to capture 26 rabbits using the drive/funnel trap method. The captured rabbits included 18 kits (15 new and three recap), seven adults (three new and four recap), and one unknown age recap. One recap kit and one recap adult were retained in the enclosure for breeding, and the remaining 24 rabbits were released to the wild in the Beezley Hills Recovery Emphasis Area (BHREA).

To date:

<b>2015 Running Total</b>	
<b>New Kits</b>	536
<b>Kit Recaptures</b>	17
<b>Total Kits</b>	553
<b>Adults - New</b>	37
<b>Adult Recaps (AVID or Punch)</b>	114
<b>Total Adults</b>	151
<b>Unknown Recaps</b>	1
<b>Total New PYRA</b>	573
<b>Total PYRA Handled</b>	<b>705</b>
<b>Kits Released to wild</b>	497
<b>Adults Released</b>	34
<b>Unknown Released to Wild</b>	1
<b>Total Released</b>	531

There are still captures planned through the end of October, and we will continue to trap and remove rabbits from the breeding enclosures as long as the weather holds and the number of rabbits in the enclosures needs to be reduced.

### Wildlife Areas

**Sinlahekin Noxious Weed Control:** Sinlahekin staff continued their efforts controlling noxious weeds on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex. Assistant Wehmeyer and Maintenance Mechanic Boulger made a sweep on the Sinlahekin for Dalmatian Toadflax and Houndstongue. Manager Haug released 110 *Microlarinus lareynii* and *M. lypiformis* – puncturevine weevils on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area.



This will be the first of hopefully many releases provided by Jennifer Andreas of the Washington State University Extension Office.

***The release of the Microlarinus sps. to control puncturevine***

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Recreational Opportunities:** The opener for the modern firearm deer season is this Saturday. The combination of improved conditions, mostly restored access, good buck carryover from last year, and the latest general season dates in years should make for a good season in the Okanogan District. For those hunters recreating in or passing through the Methow Valley we encourage you to stop by the hunter check station at the Red Barn at the west edge of Winthrop. Bring your harvested deer by to get it checked over and aged, or just stop by for information. As always we urge hunters to be familiar with all hunting regulations, stay safe, and **please respect private land!**



***Methow Valley mule deer buck*** – Photo by Scott Fitkin

**Wildlife Areas**

**ADA Hunting Opportunities:** Biologists Finger and E. Duvuvuei applied break-up paint to the Flood Flat blind and attached woven wire. The wire will be used to attach brush-up camouflage to the structure during a Washington Waterfowl Association work party. Biologists Finger and O. Duvuvuei touched up the blinds at Frenchman Regulated Access Area and installed doors to help conceal hunters. O. Duvuvuei also finished smoothing gravel at the ADA parking



area. Conditions of the blinds at the Frenchmen Regulated Access Area were checked as well in an effort to get photos suitable for the website and a Facebook post. Better photos will be taken next week when water conditions are more appropriate.

***ADA blind installed at the Flood Flat with a Bob Ross inspired paint job by E. Duvuvuei*** – Photo by R. Finger



***ADA Blind #1 at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area in early stages of flooding*** – Photos by R. Finger

***ADA Blind #2 at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area in early stages of flooding*** – Photo by R. Finger

**Beebe Springs Unit:** Natural Resource Technicians Vallance and Zabreznik completed weed control on tree and shrub plantings around the youth fishing pond. It was completed as part of Phase 5 construction. Manager Fox met with Pipkin Construction and Wildlands Inc. staff to plan hydro-seeding of the Phase 5 construction area and planting of wetland plants around the pond.



***Beebe Springs Unit youth fishing pond***

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



**Wildlife Management**

**Highway Wildlife Mortality Management:** Biologist Fitkin toured a 50 mile stretch of Highway 20 with Department of Transportation (DOT) staff to help identify hotspots for animal-vehicle collisions, particularly those areas where deer are hit most often. DOT currently has a grant to study this issue and develop a report detailing site-specific management recommendations including signage, fencing, crossing structures, etc. Such a report should

expedite implementation of management recommendations should funding for projects become available in the future.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Ecology of the Okanogan – Okanogan High School:** Manager Haug met with Okanogan High School’s advanced biology teacher Kathleen Ferguson and the Conservation District’s Kristen Cook at Driscoll Island as part of their Ecology of the Okanogan class. Manager Haug discussed the history and current management of the island. The group later collected invertebrates from the Similkameen River and took a variety of measurements to determine water quality. Manager Haug later spoke to the students regarding careers in the natural resources sciences and fielded questions related to being manager of the wildlife area.



*‘Ecology of the Okanogan’ class in the Similkameen River, Driscoll Island* – Photos by Justin Haug

**Okanogan Complex-Twisp River Fire:** Region 2’s visiting field technicians Gaston & Annanie met with Manager Furnari early Monday morning to be briefed on the project. She provided maps, two GPS units, a printout of instructions from CAMP, a camera, and a field truck. Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin showed them how to get to the area and they began their task of hiking and recording. They completed GPSing the Big Buck Unit’s burned infrastructure assessment (6.8 miles of additional fence, gates, a cistern guzzler, and 1500’+ of pipe) in three days. Gaston & Annanie provided their GPS units to Manager Furnari and she downloaded them daily. Afterwards, she sent them their corresponding Excel spreadsheets to input their notes and send them back. This is the data CAMP needs.



*Sandhill Cranes in harvest corn along Frenchmen Hills Road* – Photo by R. Finger



*Windy Pass along the Pacific Crest Trail* – Photo by Scott Fitkin



*A group of bighorn sheep near Loomis north of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, a ruby-crowned kinglet in a willow tree on the McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area, a sow black bear with three cubs near Shankers Bend on the Similkameen River, and a yellow-rumped warbler in a serviceberry near HQ* – Photos by Justin Haug

## **REGION 3**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Historic Harvest Statistics:** District Biologist Fidorra visited the NRB library to collect historic harvest statistics on jackrabbits from the 1970s and 1980s for the black-tailed jackrabbit status assessment. Fidorra also took some time to meet with several Olympia staff members on his inaugural visit to the NRB.

**Deformed Elk Hooves:** District Biologist Fidorra received the diagnostic report from Colorado State regarding the deformed elk hooves that were submitted earlier in the month. Results suggest that arthritis and injury resulted in uneven use and wear of the hooves and that hoof disease was not likely.

**Salmon Sorting:** District Biologist Fidorra assisted Ringold Hatchery staff and volunteers to help sort returning excess salmon at the trap at Ringold.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz attended a day of training on wildlife diseases, necropsy, and sampling. The main focus of the training was bighorn sheep diseases and sampling. Bernatowicz also searched the regional office for bighorn sheep trap tarps and extensions. Extra tarps were transferred to Region 2 staff for use on a new trap being built.

**Waterfowl:** Biologist Bernatowicz and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson took down the waterfowl traps at Sunnyside. No ducks were captured after the youth season even though good numbers were present on an adjacent wetland. Bernatowicz and Wilson also looked at work done with the Marsh Master and other wetlands on the Wildlife Area. There is a lot of opportunity to improve wetlands on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area.

**Other:** Biologist Bernatowicz picked up a moose head and radio collar from a local hunter at the request of Biologist Oyster. About 20 calls/emails from the public were received and responded to this week. Most requests were from elk hunters. There were a few calls regarding the Yakama Nation early waterfowl season.

**Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling:** Biologist Moore, along with Wetzel, Gallie, Bernatowicz, Leuck, and Hagan, worked the Colockum muzzleloader antlerless elk permit season in hopes to collect complete samples. WDFW staff contacted numerous hunters and discussed our effort, but overall the harvest appears to have been extremely light. Very few successful hunters were contacted by staff while in the field, and barrel collected samples were low as well.



*Elk heart from a successful muzzleloader hunter*

**Land 20/20 Grant Applications:** Moore reviewed the Lands 20/20 applications in preparation for an upcoming meeting.

**Mule Deer Study:** A collared deer mortality was investigated in the Manashtash drainage, but the animal was observed alive and well while Moore was on-sight.

**Yakima Canyon Bighorn Sheep:** Moore checked on a report of a bighorn sheep that was hit by a train in the Yakima River Canyon. The carcass was not found.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor reviewed the three alternative design layouts for the proposed shooting range at Bull Pasture. Confer Morris met with Regional Program Manager McCorquodale to discuss the layouts and the status of the project.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Forester Mackey contacted several hunters and answered questions about management activities. Most were in favor of the road maintenance and forest treatment operations that are currently going on. Mackey had contact with three people who harvested spike bulls during the week.

***Successful elk hunter with his spike bull harvested in the Horse Ridge Area***



**Wildlife Management**

**Wildhorse Wind Farm:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Access Tech Kaelber spent a day posting the Wildhorse Wind Farm near Vantage. Numerous jeep trails enter the property from

adjacent public lands and require Hunt by Written Permission and No Unauthorized Vehicle signs at the property boundary.

**Pasco Meeting:** Stutzman attended the enforcement detachment meeting in Pasco to provide an update on the private lands access program.

***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:** Retired WDFW Game Agent John Erickson volunteered his time this week to remove old eight foot high woven wire fencing from the wildlife area. This fence was part of a one square mile enclosure originally built to contain bighorn sheep and acclimate them to the area before release. Much of the fencing has been removed but portions remain and are a travel impediment to wildlife. We appreciate John's work. It is a benefit to wildlife and also earned him hours towards his AHE certification.

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Access staff reported a burned out car found at the South Emerald access parking lot to enforcement.

***Burned Mazda found at South Emerald Access Area***

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman hosted 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from St. Paul Cathedral School in Yakima. This is the third year that Mr. Mackey (no relation to Forester Mackey) has brought students out to learn a little about the wildlife area and wildlife management. Huffman discussed the wildlife area and winter feeding, and also opened up the visitor's center for a tour. The students and parents really enjoyed it and asked lots of good questions.



**Wildlife Management**

**Richland Rod and Gun Club:** District Biologist Fidorra presented information to the Richland Rod and Gun Club at their monthly membership meeting. The information included population information on Region 3 game species, hunting access opportunities, wildfire and private land web resources, and regulation changes.

**Kennewick High School Career Day:** District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with WDFW staff to plan representation at the Kennewick High School Career Day occurring October 13. Hatchery

Manager Erickson, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, and Wildlife Area Manager Bjornstrom will each cover shifts throughout the day-long event with an attendance of 500 high school students expected. Fidorra picked up some WDFW Careers and Volunteering pamphlets from the Yakima Regional Office in preparation.

**Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted one late evening hazing patrol at a large orchard and pumpkin operation near Rattlesnake Mountain. Two LP gas cannons were maintained and are in proper working condition. Although no elk were observed, a few deer (<5) were redirected away from the crop area.

**Deer Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand followed up with a wine grape operation experiencing deer damage to their wine grape crop in the Paterson area. Hazing and human presence from harvest have influenced the deer to leave the area.

**Trail Camera:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand checked on a deployed trail camera along a historically high use area from elk leaving ALE to winter wheat fields along Hanford's southern boundary. Although elk images were captured, overall numbers appear to be low.

*Hanford Bull with a wire wrap*

**Elk Hazing:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel continued working with a landowner in west Ellensburg, hazing over 100 elk that have been in his alfalfa field and the surrounding area. Master hunters continue to help in the area. Several new landowners called this week wanting to protect the elk from hunting, while several other new landowners called to complain about elk damaging their landscaping. One landowner was contacted by the homeowner's association for violating covenants and restrictions, and notified Conflict Specialist Wetzel. All landowners were instructed to work civil matters out between themselves. In general, it was agreed by all that there were too many elk at this location and helping move them across the fence would benefit everyone in the area.

**Fence Repair:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel spent a day fixing a new hole cut in the elk fence near Scully's Gully. The landowner that owns the parcel helped fix fence and provided a side by side to transport fencing materials. In addition to fixing the hole, a review of the fence in that area identified several new areas that need to be fixed prior to winter. New areas have holes cut in the fence for access.



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman coordinated installation of the new furnace with the contractor. Removal of the old furnace and installation of a new furnace went smoothly. Huffman met with the county and L&I inspectors for a final review of work permits for electrical, gas, and furnace installation. The new furnace is working great. On an interesting note, the county informed Huffman that there are two outstanding permits from 10+ years ago that never received final inspection, including the visitor's center addition and the residence kitchen remodel.

**Forest Work:** Forester Mackey completed contract administration on timber harvest, road work, and non-commercial thinning activities. The non-commercial thinning contractor started work again on Monday and is moving along fairly quickly.

*Non-commercial thinning was completed by the contractor in Section 7. The crew came back and completed hand piling in this unit after the photo was taken.*



**Prescribed Burn Preparation:** Forester Mackey met with Prescribed Burn Lead Leuschen, Department of Natural Resources Fire Unit Manager Seth Jones, and the contract fire crew on site to prepare for a prescribed burn this fall. The contractor was on site most of the week installing fire lines for the burning. Leuschen is working on a burn plan with hopes of completing the burn before elk season.

**Post Logging Activities:** Forester Mackey revisited three photo points in Unit 5-1 of the Oak Creek Thinning Project to document post logging activities.



*Before and after photos of thinning in Unit 5-1 of the Oak Creek Forester Restoration Project*

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Conflict Specialist Wetzel visited a site on John Eaton's ranch to look at a creek crossing structure designed to act as a permanent breakaway style continuation of a livestock or game fence. It is electrified, and we are tentatively planning on using something similar in the Taneum/Heart K to help solve our elk leak onto ag lands, county roads, and I-90 in that area. While there, Wetzel found a dead black bear that had apparently met its demise trying to cross I-82 (pretty old carcass).

*Example of an electrified chain fence structure that could be used to span Taneum Creek*



**Abandoned Land Rover:** Assistant Manager Hunt took a call on Tuesday reporting an abandoned Land Rover in the Quilomene Creek drainage, which is nowhere near a legal Green Dot Road. Officer Scherzinger located it on Thursday, along with signs of other off-road travel in that area. The old creek bottom road has long been put to bed, but the recent fire has made it more visible.

## **REGION 4**

**Washington's Wild Future Public Meeting:** Several Region 4 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff members attended the Washington's Wild Future public meeting to gather information and feedback on what WDFW hopes to accomplish in the future. WDFW staff gathered information on what the public feels are the most important issues facing them, gathered feedback on what the public feels WDFW should do when values and attitudes collide, and what WDFW should be doing better overall. The public turnout was exceptional. WDFW staff will continue working on this project over the next several years.



*Washington's Wild Future public meeting*

## **GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE**

### **Wildlife Management**

**Protected Wildlife Management:** Biologist Anderson continues to provide state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Anderson continues to work with the Habitat Program, local governments, and landowners to provide documentation and management where appropriate. Current items from this past week include eagle management, nest removal requests, and a compilation of all files from a new heron nesting site for the city of Shoreline attorney and two private attorneys to attempt to avoid a PDR per consultation with all parties and consultation with information governance staff in the Director's Office. One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/> One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

**Aquatic Invasive Species Assessment:** Staff from District 12 & 13 set traps to determine the presence of a deleterious species at an urban wetland. Further activity will be in conjunction with the coordination with the Aquatic Invasives program.



*District 12 staff conducting an amphibian survey in the pre-dawn hours*



*Dojo loach trapped in Bothell, WA in a storm water pond connected to North Creek. The dojo loach originates within the rivers, lakes, and ponds of Asia.*

**North Cascades Elk Herd Plan:** Biologist Yarborough completed incorporating the internal revisions from the North Cascades Elk Herd Plan. After a final look by Wildlife Program staff, the plan will be distributed for sister agency review.

**Forest Carnivore Surveys:** Biologist Yarborough and DeBruyn retrieved two trail cameras that were up on the flank of Mount Baker for the summer. No useful images were recorded.

**Point Elliott Tribes Mountain Goat Meeting:** Biologists Milner drafted and submitted meeting notes for the technical mountain goat meeting that included staff from WDFW, Sauk Suiattle Tribe, Swinomish Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe, and the US Forest Service. Topics included a discussion of how WDFW determines the number of permits and goat hunt unit boundaries in areas where hunting occurs, the results of the 2015 surveys the Tribes conducted, research findings for work Rice conducted from 2002-2008, and data from collared animals that the Muckleshoot Tribe is monitoring.

### Wildlife Areas

**Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement:** The construction of the replacement water control structure for Rainbow Pond was completed on the Lake Terrell Unit. The large beaver deceiver pipes, riser boards and overflow cage were installed, and we are now just waiting for rain to refill the pond. This project was funded with Duck Stamp funds, and was managed by Ducks Unlimited.



***Rainbow Pond water control replacement and beaver deceiver***

**Intalco Pond Water Control**

**Replacement:** Manager Kessler made up and posted signs warning the public of the construction that will be starting this week on the Intalco Pond water control replacement. This project will replace a non-functioning water control structure with a new structure and

beaver deceiver pipes. This project is funded with Duck Stamp funds, and is being managed by Ducks Unlimited.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):** Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a letter of intent to send to the Army Corps of Engineers that formalizes a request from WDFW to advance a restoration project at Spencer Island to the next feasibility and design phase. More information on this project is available at <http://www.pugetsoundnearshore.org/factsheets/SpencerIsland.pdf>. He also set up a meeting with Skagit County Public Works to discuss PSNERP projects in Skagit County.

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed and provided comments on the second draft of the tidal channel design report for the project. The report recommends the location and length of tidal channels that should be built into the project design to accurately reflect the layout of tidal channels that would likely be found in a fully functioning tidal marsh of the same scale.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Elk Hazing and Harvest:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal continued to work with youth, senior, and disabled hunters focusing hunter effort toward private landowners experiencing elk damage to crops within Elk Area 4941. Hunter success has slowed with two elk being harvested during the second season opening.

***Successful disabled hunter in Elk Area 4941***



**Feral Domestic Rabbits:** Milner consulted with internal staff and the local press on Whidbey Island to determine the status of European rabbits there. Because the introductions of these rabbits is known to come from domestic stock, Manager Link determined that they are feral domestic animals and do not fall under WDFW jurisdiction. Milner shared this information with the press as citizens of Langley work to find solutions to an increasing number of rabbits living within the city limits.

*The European rabbits flourishing in and around Langley, WA on Whidbey Island do not fall under WDFW jurisdiction*



### Wildlife Areas

#### **Western Washington Pheasant**

**Release:** Cosgrove fed and watered pheasants throughout the week. A water leak was discovered and will need to be repaired at a later time. Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove assisted with unloading pheasant delivery on Friday. Manager Rotton coordinated with pheasant volunteers who performed pheasant releases on the Leque Island site this week. Manager Kessler received 420 pheasants from the game farm and released them into the pheasant pens at Lake Terrell. He worked with volunteers to release pheasants on all three sites, including Lake Terrell, Intalco, and British Petroleum.

#### **Nooksack Unit Hunting Blind**

**Repairs:** Manager Kessler coordinated with Master Hunter volunteers to repair and refurbish two waterfowl hunting blinds on the Nooksack Unit.

#### *Nooksack Unit Waterfowl Hunting Blind Repair*



#### **British Petroleum Environmental Monitoring & Weed Control:**

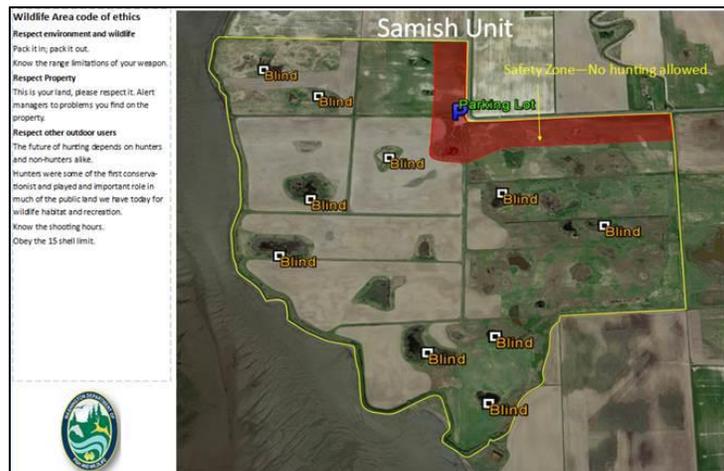
Environmental workers with British Petroleum performed monitoring and weed control on wetland mitigation plots on the British Petroleum Unit. Manager Kessler made up and posted warning signs to inform hunters of the work and managed a partial closure of the unit while the work was being performed.

**Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project:** The WDFW construction crew completed construction of the major project elements and has scheduled a walk-through of the site with

staff from the funding agency (Natural Resources Conservation Service) for a final inspection this week. A sub-contractor began hauling excavation spoils from the project off of the site.

**Waterfowl Hunting Season Prep:** Cosgrove and Meis began installing boards and closing water control structures throughout the Island and Samish units to begin developing sheet water flooding conditions to improve waterfowl feeding and hunting opportunities. Meis and Cosgrove completed posting of Game Reserve signs on the new eastern boundary of the Fir Island Farms Game Reserve. Cosgrove adjusted Safety Zone signs at the Samish Unit following the final mowing performed by the leaseholder and checked signage at the Jensen Unit.

*Skagit Wildlife Area personnel are preparing, printing, and installing new site maps for the primary hunting units*



**Island Unit:** Last Saturday, Cosgrove led a tour of the Island Unit coordinated by the Washington Waterfowl Association. Around 30 hunters attended. Cosgrove explained current management strategies, including expanding the diversity of crops (barley, corn, and fava beans) and other vegetation beneficial to waterfowl, including millet, smartweed, bidens, yellow nutsedge, and foxtail. Cosgrove gave a tour of the Island Unit to Sunnyside Wildlife Area Manager Greg Bjornstrom. Cosgrove explained recent history and current management strategies to enhance the area for waterfowl and hunting. Meis and Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers, prepared equipment, and assisted with ferrying equipment on and off the Island Unit. Final hunting season preparations are complete and field conditions are looking good.

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units:** Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo continued with the set-up of duck blinds on harvested hunt units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Deyo and Otto checked multiple sites for harvest and consulted with growers about pending harvests. Otto and Deyo prepared blind materials and supplies for delivery to hunting units.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**2015 Hunting Seasons:** District Biologists continue to provide guidance and information to hunters and land managers calling to inquire about specific hunt information, guidance, and how

to hunt the district. Calls are concerning how to take animals, cougar and bear hunt methods given other seasons, scheduling CITES pelt seal needs, GMU boundaries, landowner reference information, and other general questions. The current pamphlet can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>. Biologist Anderson relayed hunting opportunities for the upcoming season in GMU 422-Vashon. The article is not out yet, but here is similar coverage from last season: <http://www.vashonbeachcomber.com/news/280699142.html>. Biologist DeBruyn took measurements and samples from a goat harvested by the auction permit winner in the Mount Baker area.

### **Wildlife Conflict Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal installed temporary fencing in the Day Creek area of Skagit County to mitigate elk damage to a newly planted winter wheat crop.

#### ***Temporary elk fladry fencing in Day Creek***

**Black Bear Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a bear complaint in Skagit County. A large bear has been frequenting several backyards consuming fallen apples. The reporting party was advised to remove the apples and monitor if the bear returns. Several other neighboring properties were advised to remove apples that had fallen onto the ground.



### **Wildlife Areas**

**Skagit Headquarters:** Following a final electric inspection, Manager Rotton met with CAMP staff and DD #22 representatives to discuss the preliminary operation of the new Wiley pump stations. A meeting is scheduled for early November for performance inspection and final pump program adjustments. Meis worked on editing wildlife area maps and Headquarters Unit Tidegate Project Closure maps, and also created some new maps for the Island Unit. Cosgrove finished various tasks at the Headquarters Unit, including cleaning out the inside of the John Deere 7230 and 7320 tractors, grading the entrance roads with the John Deere 5300, mowing road edges and the north field, and cleaning out the spray tank used with the John Deere 5300. Manager Rotton attended the final wrap up meeting for the Fir Island Farms construction season. A meeting is scheduled for later this month to discuss the year two work schedule.

**Samish Unit Blind Building:** Manager Rotton met with an Eagle Scout to complete the final paperwork and to discuss the blind building project on the Samish Unit. From the photos and discussion it was a good community learning project and the blind should serve the hunters for many years.

***A completed Eagle Scout project and the blind installation crew on the Samish Unit***

**Fir Island Farms:** The 2015 construction season was completed for the Fir Island Farms restoration project. IMCO has demobilized equipment and secured the site for the winter. The area is now open for public viewing access. Snow geese have been arriving in the area and should begin utilizing the site soon.



**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Hunting Season Preparation:** Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with several landowners in the Snow Goose Quality Hunt Program to discuss the hunting opportunities on their properties. Biologist Wingard fielded multiple inquiries on the status of the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4, and he assured the hunters the program was still active and sites would be on the GoHunt website soon.

**418 Elk Hunt:** Biologist Wingard made arrangements with hunters who have modern firearm permits to pass out Sierra Pacific keys. Biologist Wingard contacted an archery hunter who was successful but had not reported his harvest or returned his key. Biologist Wingard scheduled a time for the key to be returned and conveyed the importance of complying by the rules of the special permit. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo scheduled a meeting for a successful elk hunter to return his key.

**Private Lands Site Ranking Index:** Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard tested and discussed options for a new private lands program site ranking index to determine which of our sites provide the best return on investment. Modifications to the ranking index to more accurately judge waterfowl sites in the North Puget Sound region were discussed.

**Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination**

**Hunter Education Instructor Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated one new hunter education class in Region 4. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Lance Char to hold an on-line field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Chief Instructor Char will be conducting evaluations at the Region 4 office each Monday during August and September except Labor Day and two Mondays in October. Coordinator Dazey answered instructor questions on how to handle firearm restricted students in hunter education classes and how to close out classes. Coordinator Dazey reviewed proposed instructor policies on dummy ammo and uniform. Dazey also reviewed and offered suggestions on how to update the “How to Become an Instructor” pamphlet.

**Customer Service:** With the hunting season upon us Coordinator Dazey answered a parent's concern about whether hunter education instructors pass a background check and what policies DFW hunter education has in place for youth protection. After a lengthy explanation of the instructor certification process and instructor policy and addressing the particular class that the parent's son was signed up for, the parent was reassured about her 14 year old's participation in the hunter education class. Dazey assisted the Region 4 team at the Washington Wild Future meeting.

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

**Leadership Training:** Biologist DeBruyn attended leadership training in Olympia.

**REGION 5**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan:** Wildlife Biologists Anderson and Van Leuven attended a follow-up coordination meeting with the WDFW internal technical advisory group. The majority of the meeting was dedicated to editing the goals and objectives for the Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan. Issues related to projected changes from climate change were also discussed. The final part of the meeting focused on the draft forest management plan. The goal of the forest management plan is to improve forest health (both conifer and oak habitats), as well as maintain and enhance habitat for the state threatened western gray squirrel, deer, cavity nesting species, and a variety of other wildlife found on the Klickitat Wildlife Area.



***Klickitat Wildlife Area***

**Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Removal of Derelict Fencing:** Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis worked with two volunteers from Lewis and Clark College to remove approximately a quarter mile of unneeded barbed wire fence. Despite the small work party, a good quantity of old wire was hauled out. Volunteers Jamey and Robin have worked on similar projects at the Klickitat Wildlife Area before and their experience is especially helpful and appreciated.

*Volunteers from Lewis & Clark College*

**Sondino Unit:** Water levels are very low at the Sondino Ponds, as expected. These ponds are critical habitat for the endangered western pond turtle and this year's drought is having an impact on available wetlands. Volunteer Donna Enz assisted with reading the water gauge indicating the magnitude of the drought.



*Pond B in the Sondino Unit*



**Cowlitz Wildlife Area:** Wildlife Area staff members have completed removing excess vegetation from waterfowl ponds on the Kosmos Unit. The three ponds were built to create wintering waterfowl habitat and had become choked with willows, cottonwoods and aquatic vegetation, such as cattails. The work was accomplished using a tractor and hydraulic arm-brushing machine.



*Kosmos Pond in the Cowlitz Wildlife Area*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**2015 Hunting Seasons:** Regional Wildlife Biologists and Customer Service Staff fielded many contacts from the hunting public related to the start of various hunting seasons. Specifics on where and how to hunt, questions about regulations, confusion over access to private industrial forestlands, etc. were all common topics of conversation over the past week. Hunters are reminded to review the Hunting Prospects located at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/prospects/> on

the WDFW website. The prospects detail information about game species populations, access information, changes to regulations, etc.

**Goat and Sheep Checks:** As hunting seasons for mountain goats and bighorn sheep progress, successful hunters are required to visit a WDFW regional office to have these animals checked. During the past week in Region 5, Biologist Holman checked one mountain goat and one bighorn sheep, both from Region 3 hunt areas. The animals are evaluated for age and sex and detailed measurements are taken of the horns. Thanks to WDFW Biologists Bernatowicz and Lowe, of Yakima and Spokane respectively, for checking mountain goats harvested from Region 5's Goat Rocks population.

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

**D-10 Wildlife Conflict**

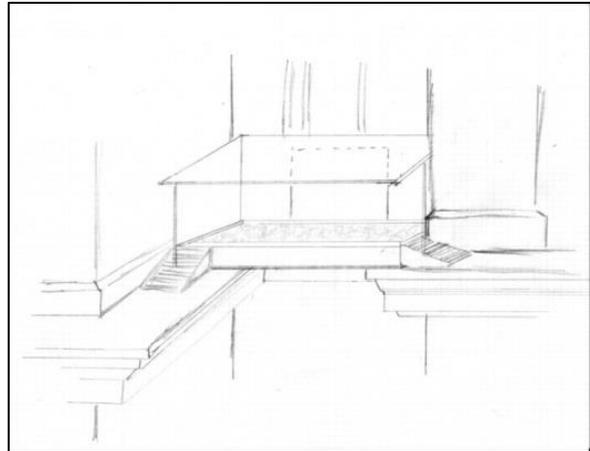
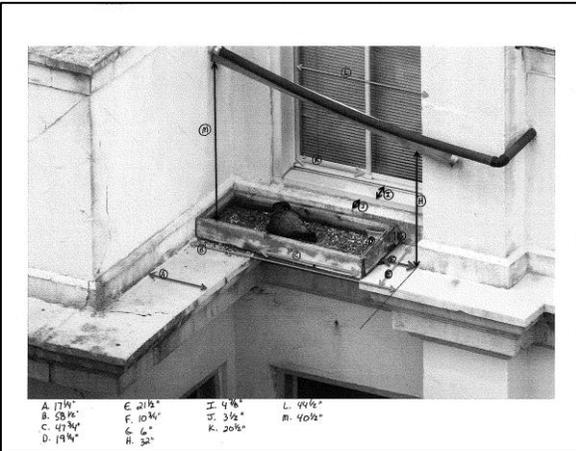
**DPCA Status:** Conflict Specialist Conklin followed up with land owners in Randle who have Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCA), with the agency. One land owner renewed a DPCA. Conflict Specialist Conklin reached out to Master Hunter volunteers who may be interested in volunteering to repair/install fencing in Region 5. Conklin will place their names on a spreadsheet so when fencing repairs are needed she and Conflict Specialist Peterson can more easily contact the volunteers. Patch fencing was also delivered to a farm in Wahkiakum County.

**REGION 6**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Peregrine Falcon:** Biologist Tirhi is working with three volunteers in the Tacoma area to replace an aged nesting box used by falcons to nest over the last two years. The box was placed over 10 years ago although falcons have only recently begun using it. Gravel and other debris from the box has been falling hundreds of feet below to the pavement, potentially hitting pedestrians below. Tirhi transported one of several boxes made by an Eagle Scout from Troup 474 Kent. Unfortunately, this box did not fit the dimensions of the location so volunteers Fergus Hyke and Martin Muller will be building a custom box for the location. Tirhi receives several calls each summer from residents and workers in downtown Tacoma who have come to adopt and care for "their" peregrines.



*Current peregrine box (with measurements, left) and sketch of new box design (right)*

**Oregon Spotted Frogs—captive rearing and reintroduction:** Biologist Tirhi and Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Staff Biologist Martens organized the 2015 release of captive reared spotted frogs to the JBLM reintroduction location. There were 1,179 juvenile spotted frogs released last week from a total of 1,300 eggs that had been collected in spring for rearing (91%). WDFW and partners initiated the spotted frog pilot captive rearing and reintroduction program in 2007 (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00403/>). Since that time, 13,551 spotted frog eggs have been collected and delivered to the four facilities participating in captive rearing: Woodland Park Zoo, Cedar Creek Correctional Center, Oregon Zoo, and NW Trek. From those eggs, 7,344 juvenile spotted frogs have been reared and released to JBLM reintroduction locations (54%). Although spotted frogs have been confirmed to survive following reintroduction, no spotted frog egg-production has been documented at the reintroduction site after seven years of release. For that reason and others, the captive rearing and reintroduction



program is being suspended to allow a review of the program and decisions regarding the future of spotted frog recovery. Region 6 is very appreciative of the four facilities and other partners in this program who have spent thousands of hours assisting with spotted frog recovery.

*Oregon spotted frog juvenile release, JBLM, 2015*

**Mazama pocket gopher:** District 11 staff continues surveys for Mazama pocket gopher occupancy and the development of site evaluation procedures. Sites completed last week include West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area, Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, and Wolf Haven. The new standardized survey methods, designed to detect occupancy under a range

of site conditions, will result in different detection probabilities estimated by the model and potentially will identify additional factors associated with detectability. These differences will be incorporated into the site evaluation models. Work continues through October.

**Oregon Spotted Frogs—Habitat Enhancement:** Biologist Tirhi and staff used the assistance of volunteer Blessing and two master hunters to mow, rake, and remove reed canary grass from management plots at the Salmon Creek oviposition site. Forty work hours were spent during the work party to cut canary grass using gas powered grass cutters, followed by raking and bundling in tarps for removal. Volunteer Blessing had rigged an ingenious pulley system using a truck to pull each the 150+ pound bundles out. Tirhi will be scheduling a second work party to finalize prep of the western plots. This will complete field restoration work for the Salmon Creek breeding site for 2015. Spotted frogs begin breeding each year in mid-February.



*District staff cutting reed canary grass master hunter completing required volunteer hours by raking reed canary grass*



*Master Hunter completing bundling reed canary grass for removal*

**Taylor’s Checkerspot Rapid Habitat Assessment:** Biologists Linders and Randolph are working with staff in data systems on identifying methods for automating the habitat assessment for Taylor’s checkerspot based on numerous variables collected at 12 sites on south Puget prairies. The assessment is designed to indicate where habitat is ready for reintroduction, or what treatments are needed when it falls short of the targets. In addition, Linders has been working with land managers from the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) and JBLM to design planting and seeding treatments for several future reintroduction sites based on the RHA data. Linders has also been working on a report detailing the complete project methodology and results to date. Randolph has been working to consolidate the 2013, 2014, and 2015 geodatabases into a single consolidated geodatabase.

**Creating a Multi-Agency Spatial Database and Content Management System:** Biologist Randolph has been assisting CNLM in gathering spatial and other pertinent data collected on south Puget prairies as part of a pilot effort to create one joint database that could be used to support ecosystem restoration, management, and research. The database will be built on the existing Data Basin platform created by the Conservation Biology Institute.

**Fisher Monitoring:** Biologist Michaelis reviewed photos taken from six camera stations within two hexes. No fishers were detected, but a curious coyote and a bobcat were photo-captured from one site along the Humptulips River.



*Note how obscured an area this is. Sites are intentionally sought out that make it difficult for humans to detect and reduce the chance of theft and/or disturbance. Other animals detected at this site included: deer, opossum, raccoon, and a spotted skunk.*

**Deer Monitoring:** Biologist Michaelis accounted for all does and fawns in the Satsop cluster while Biologist Murphy was on annual leave. In the Mason cluster, a mortality signal was given and Research Scientist Rice notified Biologist Michaelis. The following morning the doe was discovered to still be alive. Very seldom do we get a chance to actually encounter a marked doe shortly before death. Later after death, a full necropsy was performed by Dyanna Lambourn. Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield requested samples to be taken for further diagnosis.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Hunter Field Contacts:** Biologist Novack patrolled part of Capitol Forest and the Lower Chehalis State Forest for muzzleloader activity. Very few muzzleloader hunters were seen. Plenty of apparently illegal activity was discovered in the Lower Chehalis State Forest, including broken gates, illegal firewood cutting, and four-wheeler intrusion into the road closure area. Two teenage boys (both without helmets) were stopped before heading into the closure area off Russell Road.

### **Private Lands /Conflict**

**Private Timber Lands:** Biologist Harris met with a timberland owner about public hunting access. The meeting was about developing an access agreement that will assist the landowner with costs associated with public access. The landowner manages approximately 70,000 acres in Region 6. Roughly 64,000 acres of the lands are open to public hunting and other passive forms of outdoor recreation. One of the topics of concern for the landowner is target

shooting. Littering, ORVs, and other problems were also discussed. The landowner praised the local WDFW police officers for their efforts to help with problems associated with public recreation. With information gathered, Biologist Harris will be working on an access agreement intended to assist the landowner.

**Waterfowl:** Biologist Harris spoke to several landowners with waterfowl access agreements about the upcoming season. With staff shortages and heavy workloads it will be tough to get sites signed and ready for the opener. Some of the finer details like repairing and building blinds will have to wait until after the opener.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Eagle Scout Project:** Manager Belson helped facilitate an Eagle Scout workday at the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. Eagle Scout candidate Casey Hyatt led a group of local volunteers to complete two separate projects at the wildlife area field station: 1) demolition of the old cinder block milk shed and 2) final painting of the front and back porches of the historic Miller-Brewer House. The proposal to dismantle the remains of the dilapidated and hazardous 1940s/50s-era milk shed was reviewed by Archaeologist Kelly and Historian Austin (WSDOT). Mitigation for the loss of the structure was accomplished through photographic documentation of the demolition. Approximately a dozen volunteers worked throughout the better part of a Saturday to complete these excellent and much-needed projects. Ecologist Tveten was instrumental in making this work possible.

**Other**

**Washington’s Wild Future:** Biologist Tirhi and Wildlife Area Manager Belson represented the Region 6 wildlife program at the South Puget Sound Washington’s Wild Future Initiative open house. This is an initiative of WDFW Director Unsworth aimed to “strengthen the department’s relationships with communities, increase support for conservation and outdoor recreation, and help ensure WDFW programs and services meet the public’s needs.” Biologist Tirhi fielded



several comments from attendees, including questions about wolf management and status, partnerships on maintaining WDFW wildlife areas and equipment, and obtaining support from partners on legislative funding for the agency. In general, Tirhi heard praise for our employees and recognition that WDFW does not receive the funding that it needs for the increased work that is needed with a growing Washington.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Cultural Resource Training:** Manager Belson attended a four-day interagency Cultural Resource Training (west side) in Oak Harbor. The training covered a wide range of regulatory and practical matters, including Section 106, GEO 05-05, adverse effects, Washington history, and tribal consultation, as well as site visits to Deception Pass, Ebey's Landing, and even the site of the former Whidbey Island Game Farm.