

Wildlife Program

Week of September 28 – October 4, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Livestock Depredation: Biologist Shepherd was contacted by a Washington State University Research Team while conducting routine wolf location inspections. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Enforcement Officer Keith Kirsch responded to the report and found the dead calf within a U.S. Forest Service grazing allotment along the west Branch LeClerc Creek in Pend Oreille County. The calf was completely consumed, leaving only a small amount of bones at the site. The cause of death was ruled as unknown. Another larger calf appeared to be shot or struck by a vehicle in a different part of the allotment. No predator sign was seen near that calf, although a dead moose was 15 yards away that also appeared to be shot.

Dirty Shirt Pack Area and Range Rider Direction: Biologist Shepherd, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and contract range riders discussed strategies in an area with wolf depredations on the Colville National Forest. Range riders are present, and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, Technician Bendixen, and Biologist Shepherd worked multiple days and nights in the Dirty Shirt pack area.

Producer Contacts: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted the producer in the North Fork Chewelah Creek USFS allotment. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted the producer in the West Branch of LeClerc Creek in Pend Oreille County.

Range Rider Contacts: Range riders are present in the North Fork Chewelah Creek Allotments. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted range riders in the North Fork Chewelah Creek allotments keeping them updated on wolf activity and locations.

Wolf Advisory Group: Biologist Shepherd attended the Wolf Advisory Group meeting on the second day they met in Ellensburg.

Stevens County Cattlemen's Association: Biologist Shepherd attended the Stevens County Cattlemen's meeting in Colville where thorough discussions were conducted on topical issues.

Wolf Pack Monitoring: Natural Resource Worker Don Weatherman conducted day and night patrols during the week in USFS grazing allotments east of Chewelah, monitoring the Dirty Shirt collared wolf and any new wolf sign.

Monthly Wolf Updates to Producers: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett provided a monthly update to livestock producers in Spokane, Lincoln, Whitman, and south Stevens counties on current wolf activity. Information about recent trapping efforts, camera work, and all reported predator depredations were shared.

University Student Wolf Conflict Education: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett participated in the first of two Gonzaga University presentations to discuss wolf –livestock conflicts. The first presentation was a field tour with a local producer affected by wolves. This is a great opportunity to engage young minds that may not otherwise have had exposure to the livestock industry.

Reports of Wolves Howling: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received two separate reports of two wolves howling at night in the upper end of Whiskey Creek in Walla Walla County.

Tucannon Pack: Biologist Earl spent a considerable amount of time this week monitoring the Tucannon Pack’s movements and meeting with producers in the areas while the pack moved from Columbia County to the Little Butte area in Asotin County. While moving, they crossed through a large grazing allotment in the Lick Fork area. Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade located various sized tracks, which indicated that the collard male was not travelling alone. The wolves are currently located amongst 250 pair of cattle that have been rounded up to move off the grazing allotment by October 05, 2015. Earl and Wade located multiple tracks within one half mile of the cattle’s location. Earl and Wade visited with the producer at his camp to let them know about the wolves in the area. The producer currently has eight range riders assisting him.



Multiple sized tracks on the Lick Fork of Asotin Creek



Tracks amongst the cattle off of Little Butte in Asotin County

Sensitive Release Agreement: While contacting producers with cattle in the Little Butte area, Biologist Earl reached a cattleman who wanted to be added to the list of cooperators with a sensitive information agreement. Natural Resource Technician Wade met with the producer and had him sign an agreement. Earl sent the agreement to Olympia staff for approval.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolf Reports: Moore continued to check the District for wolf reports. An observation came in of multiple wolves near the Cascade Crest. There was no hard evidence associated with the report, but staff will continue to watch this area to see if a cluster of sightings begins to develop.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Grizzly Bear Survey: District Wildlife Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince dismantled four hair-snare corrals and self-activated trail cameras deployed over the summer within a targeted area of the Selkirk Mountains. No grizzly bear detections were made this time.

However, black bear “hits” were photo-documented at all four corrals and a cougar was photo-



documented at one station. Hair-snare corrals are barbed wire stretched around four or more trees, forming a corral, with lure (typically fish and cow’s blood) placed in the center. The objective is for the bear to cross the barbed wire and leave a hair sample that can be sent to a laboratory for genetic (DNA) analysis. There is a self-activated trail camera placed at the corral for initial bear species identification.

Black bear photographed at hair-snare corral deployed in the Selkirk Mountains

Turnbull Elk Herd: Biologists Atamian and Lowe conducted the annual aerial survey of the elk herd on and around Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. A total of 154 elk were observed (82 cows, 48 calves, and 24 bulls). Relative to the previous ten years of surveys, the number of elk counted this year was well below the 307 observed on average, and below last year’s low count of 207. The bull to cow and calf to cow ratios were 0.29 and 0.59, respectively. Seven moose were also seen on this year’s survey. Extremely dry conditions were noted throughout the area.



Part of a group of 40 elk on Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

CRP SAFE: Biologist Lewis continued to work with the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices on completing State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (CRP-SAFE) contracts for FY 15. Lewis spent time meeting with landowners to review technical job sheets for their projects and to get signatures on contracts. Lewis also spent time reviewing conservation plans for NRCS.

Projects have various starting dates with one starting this fall, the majority of the projects will begin planting next fall after a year of fallow/weed control.

CRP SAFE Contracts: Biologist Baarstad completed the required documents for 19 CRP-SAFE contracts and delivered the information to Lincoln County FSA and NRCS staff for signatures. Baarstad advised landowners of fieldwork requirements for SAFE contracts.

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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Confluence Fire near Rogersburg: A new wildfire started on Friday, October 2 at about 1:00 pm near Rogersburg. The fire burned about 100 acres of private, Bureau of Land Management, and WDFW land. The source of the ignition appears to be residences at Rogersburg, but the exact cause is still unknown at this time. The Department of Natural Resources responded very quickly and was able to put the fire out using hand crews and a helicopter. The fire is currently in “Patrol” status. Wildlife Area staff will evaluate WDFW land burned on Monday morning.

Friday’s fire at Rogersburg –
Photo courtesy of Facebook



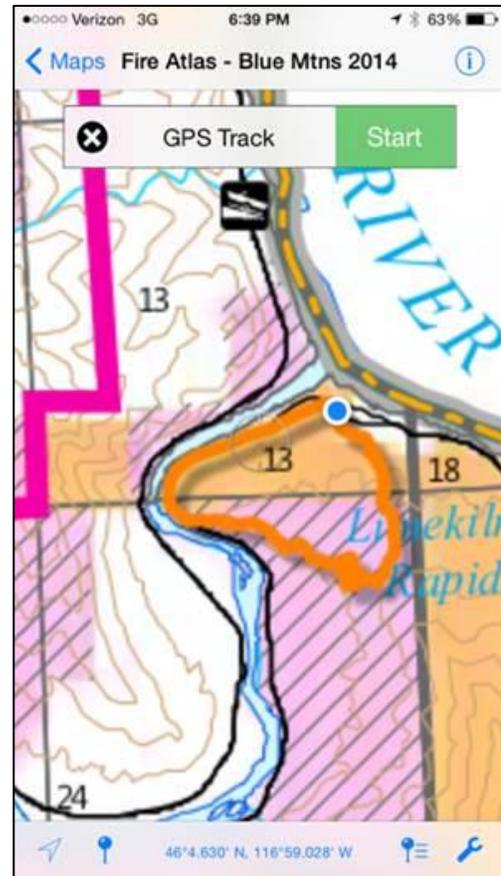
Fire perimeter map courtesy of DNR. Purple shaded lands are WDFW. Point of ignition is indicated at blue dot.

Wildlife Conflict

Deer Damage to Pumpkins: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley continues to work with a farmer in Walla Walla County regarding deer damage to their pumpkin crop. With the harvest now complete, the farmer stated the use of only seven damage prevention deer permits (over two years), hazing, and the new three way off set electric fence Rasley designed increased his total pumpkin harvest by 40% for a total of 80 tons of pumpkins. All the money the farmer made from the pumpkins went to the Ronald McDonald house in Spokane and Seattle to purchase computers and flat screen TVs for the kids that are battling cancer.

Private Lands

Hunter Education: Biologist Thorne Hadley taught a class of 30 participants at the WDFW Hunter Safety Education class about wildlife conservation as well as answering many questions on hunting access and WDFW hunting programs.



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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

SCWA Office/Wildlife Mount Donations: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Christensen did extensive cleaning and rearranging of the office at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area headquarters. We had to make space to accommodate several wildlife mounts that were recently donated to the wildlife area. Palmer and Christensen picked up the final mount, a bull elk, this week.



Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee (NWPTC) Meeting: Supervisor McCanna attended and facilitated the NWPTC meeting in Wisconsin. The four day meeting had fifteen states represented with topics including state status reports, current pheasant research, pheasant plan coordinator and plan revision data still needed, effects of grazing to stimulate grass and forb growth, pheasant survey protocols, pheasant crowing count smart phone app, and the business portion of the meeting. McCanna was voted the chair of the steering committee of executive



officers to work with the new plan coordinator (once hired). McCanna and the plan coordinator will represent the NWPTC at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Resident Game Bird Working Group meeting, and possibly other meetings as needed (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Northeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies).

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Columbia Basin Feral Pigs: Biologist O. Duvuvuei received a call about feral pigs in the Desert Unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. This was the second call about feral pigs in a few weeks and both reports were within a couple miles of each other. Duvuvuei visited one of the sites where pigs were reported and did not find any sign of pigs in the area. Staff will continue to monitor the area for feral pig use.

Sage Grouse: Biologist Gallie coordinated Diversity Technicians Annanie and Gaston to conduct field site checks on agricultural fields that are being used by male sage grouse with GPS transmitters more than we would have expected. Of importance was identifying what state of the dry-land agricultural cycle the field was in, in other words what is the ground cover (green winter wheat/canola, fallow stubble, plowed dirt, or CRP). The changes in field conditions will affect how sage grouse use or avoid them on the landscape.



Not exactly “typical” sage grouse habitat. Recent GPS points indicate use of a fallow stubble wheat field by a male sage grouse in Douglas County.

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass finalized the SEPA documents and sent them out for their comment and review process after Methow Wildlife Area Manager Sherry Furnari signed them. Bass also responded to questions about the Section 7 consultation with USFWS to complete the review process and hopefully hear word back sometime in mid-October. The cultural resources review process is awaiting results from CWU. Once the sites are protected and marked, Bass can begin to cruise the sale and prepare the RFQ packet for interested buyers. The summary of the project was completed and sent to Olympia for approval from the Commission (required if more than one million board feet is involved in the timber sale).

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

Wildlife Areas

Americans with Disabilities: Biologists Finger, E. Duvuvuei, and O. Duvuvuei worked with Washington Waterfowl Association volunteers to construct our third and final ADA blind for the season. Special thanks to our skilled and productive volunteers for helping us provide better service to our disabled hunters!

WDFW staff and Washington Waterfowl Association volunteers putting together the side walls for the ADA blind – Photo by R. Finger



Installing the ADA blind on site at the Gloyd Unit – Photo by R. Finger

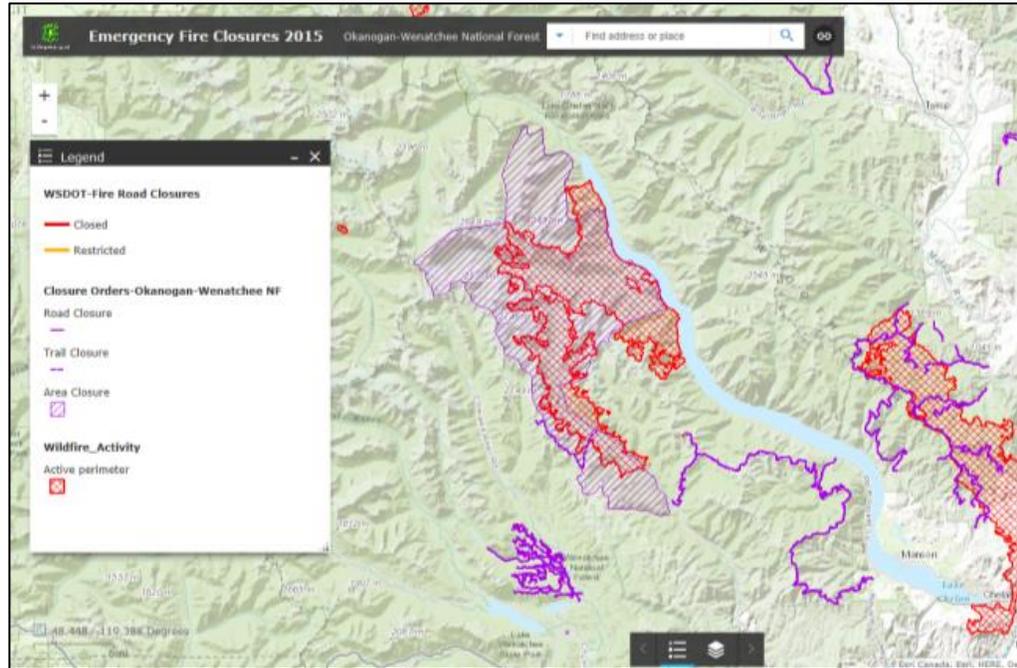
Okanogan Complex and North Star Fire Area Closures: Much of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest remains open to recreation. However, some access restrictions are still in place in areas near the fires. The US Forest Service (USFS) is planning on keeping several of these restrictions in place through winter 2016 due to hazardous conditions that remain in the wake of the wildfires. Hunters need to be aware of these closures and adjust

accordingly. General updated closure information is available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/okawen/news-events/?cid=STELPRD3857138>. More specific links to closure maps were not working at the time of this report, but will likely be fixed this coming week. In the interim, recreationists can get information by visiting or calling Forest Service Offices in Okanogan (509-826-3275), Tonasket (509-486-2186), or Winthrop (509-996-4000).

Chelan County Fire: With cooling temperatures and dropping fire danger, the USFS has reduced the size of the fire area closures in Chelan County. In particular, FS Road 6200-

Chiwawa River Road, is now open. This road is a major route for hunter access in GMU 245 and opens access to a tremendous amount of prime mule deer, elk, forest grouse, and black bear hunting areas. Road and area

closures still remain in effect in portions of GMUs 245, 247, and 246.



Sandhill cranes in an agricultural field near Winthrop – Photo by Scott Fitkin



The ‘Super Moon’ setting behind the west wall of the Sinlahekin Valley –
Photo by Justin Haug



A pair of American white pelicans and four double-crested Cormorants near the Chief Joseph Dam – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager

Huffman received an email about a large bull killed on I-90 and inquiring about mounting for display in the visitor’s center. Huffman contacted Officer Peterson about taking the large bull, whose head and cape were being stored in a cooler in Cle Elum.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundations (RMEF) Great Elk Tour Program was contacted and they were interested in mounting the bull for the traveling show. Huffman contacted Regional Director Livingston about what was the best option and Livingston supported coordinating with RMEF. Huffman located a taxidermist in Tieton who could donate time to finish caping out the bull. Huffman drove to Ellensburg and met up with Peterson to transport the bull back to Tieton. Thank you to Ric Shirrod at “All That’s Wild Taxidermy” for caping out this huge bull. Huffman hauled the hide to the regional office where it will be stored in the freezer until it can be transported to Montana for tanning. The antlers and skull cap will be stored at Oak Creek until they are ready for mounting by the RMEF taxidermist in Montana. The bull will be mounted next year for the 2017 show and will be returned to WDFW in 2018. Rough scoring of the bull by Shirrod was 429 7/8. The sheds from the bull in 2014 scored 433 5/8.



WDFW Forester Mackey standing the antlers the road killed bull from I-90. The bull has been named G-3 for the very long third tines on his rack.



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom coordinated with Dave Heimer to return the Marsh Master to the Skagit Wildlife Area next week. Manager Bjornstrom operated the Marsh Master on the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit and mowed two wetlands full of encroaching bulrush and cattail. The use of the rented Marsh Master ended on Sunday with a two week total of wetland treated at approximately 103 acres! Most of the treatment entailed mowing encroaching vegetation, but some spraying was also completed.



Before/after pictures of a wetland treated with the Marsh Master

Wildlife Management

Duck Traps: District Biologist Fidorra baited and checked duck traps on Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch this week. No ducks have returned to the site following the Youth Hunt and Fidorra removed the two traps on Friday.

Diversity Species Status Assessment: District Biologist Fidorra worked on the Diversity Species Status Assessment for black-tailed jackrabbits. He also coordinated with Biologist Vander Haegen regarding past research on shrub-steppe birds for additional species assessments.

Ferruginous Hawk Survey: District Biologist Fidorra worked with BPA to acquire raptor nest data from the Midway-Moxee and Midway-Grandview line surveys so that the data can be used in the 2016 ferruginous hawk survey.

Wood Duck Nest Box Project: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed and provided edits to the Richland Rod and Gun Club's Permit application for continuation of their wood duck nest box project.

Sensitive Species Sightings: District Biologist Fidorra entered sightings of sensitive species into Wildlife Survey Data Management, including a pygmy short-horned lizard photographed by Pike Minnow Technician Werlau in Juniper Dunes.



Pygmy Short-horned Lizard in Juniper Dunes Wilderness

Reindeer Inquiry: District Biologist Fidorra received a call requesting regulatory information on acquiring and keeping reindeer as livestock. After contacting the WA Dept. of Agriculture and WDFW Veterinarians, as well as consultation with several WACs, Fidorra was able to inform the citizen of the options.

Wildlife Conflict Conference Call: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand and District Biologist Fidorra participated in the monthly Wildlife Conflict conference call. Topics discussed included new WAC adoption, the new HQ position, program school training, Wildlife Control Operator training, and damage claims.

SAFE Program: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Benton County landowner about the SAFE program. The landowner plans to enroll 300-500 acres in the program but had a number of questions about cost share, seed mixes, and site prep.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz contacted a landowner in the Yakima River Canyon who recently acquired domestic goats. The landowner was unaware of potential disease transmission to bighorn sheep and had a lot of good questions. The landowner was willing to have the goats tested for *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia*. Testing will occur sometime after training this week.

Colockum Elk Sampling: Biologist Bernatowicz analyzed harvests from previous Colockum Muzzleloader antlerless permit seasons to help determine the best times to have people in the field collecting organs. Two-thirds of the harvest typically occurs on opening weekend, with only 4% of the harvest coming Tuesday and Wednesday combined. Bernatowicz worked opening day of the season and collected three samples. Overall, pressure and hunter success seemed pretty low. Other than a group of 300-500 elk going back to the reserve in the morning, few other elk were seen by hunters. All groups encountered had antlerless in camp and lots of questions about the herd and seasons.

Colockum Bull Study: A radio-collar was brought into the office by a DNR employee who found the collar near Ellensburg. The GPS portion of the collar was cut off and no frequencies were seen on the collar. Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Biologist Moore to narrow down the missing collars and determine which bull had worn the collar.

Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling: Biologist Moore completed the preparations of all the drop barrels for the organ collection effort. Barrels were placed in the field prior to the hunt. Moore, Bernatowicz, and Leuck worked the opening weekend of the season. The opener was very slow, with less than expected number of hunters in the field. Overall, only three samples from adult cow elk were collected. WDFW staff will continue to be in the field in hopes the harvest will pick up.



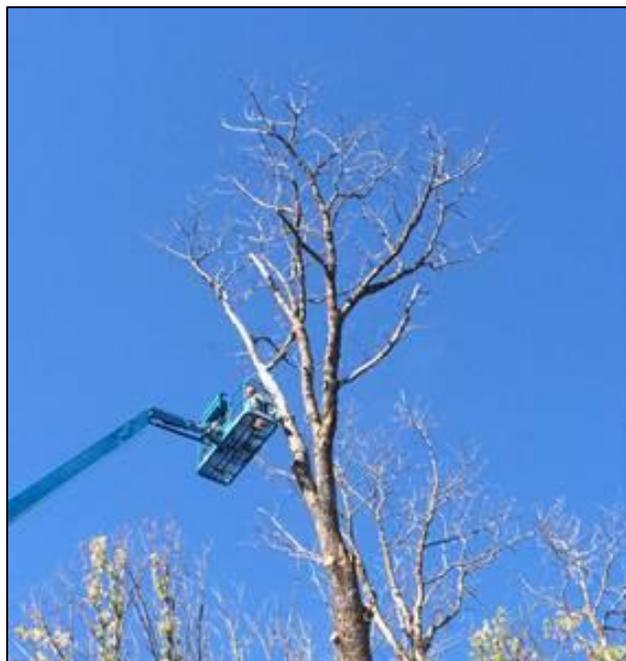
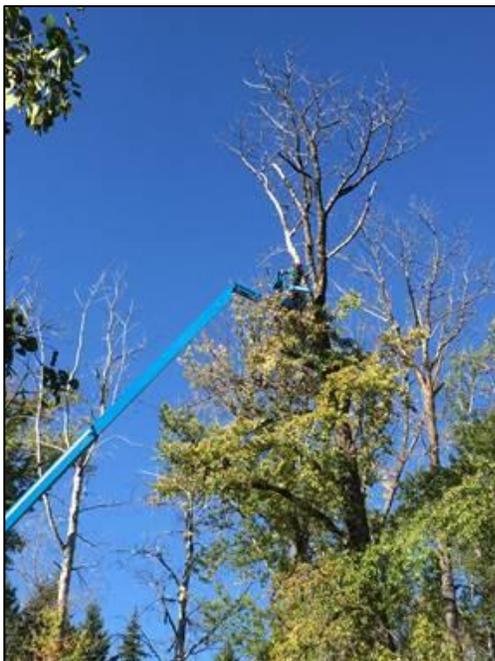
Organ Collection Barrel placed out in GMU 328

Colockum Bull Study: Moore has continued to check for mortalities on our collared elk. There were no mortalities during the week.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Taylor and Natural Resource Technician Kass assisted Access staff in the removal of a hazardous tree at Kinghorn Slough. The tree was a tall cottonwood that was leaning towards buildings on adjacent private property.



***Danger Tree at Kinghorn Slough
coming down piece by piece***

Sunnyside Murray Wildlife Area:

Manager Bjornstrom drove up to the Rothrock Access Site on the Thornton Unit to change locks on the gate after the ADA hunt. When Manager Bjornstrom arrived he noticed that several signs had been shot at and trash was left at the site as well. Manager Bjornstrom received a report from one of the



ADA hunters stating that the vandalism took place Friday night at the access site. Neither the perpetrators nor the vandalism was there at 7:20 p.m. Friday night when the hunters left the area, but the vandalism was present at 4:30 a.m. Saturday morning when the hunters reentered the unit. Manager Bjornstrom forwarded on the info to Sgt. Fulton.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Damage Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage complaint from a wine grape producer in the Silver Dollar area. Several nonlethal hazing strategies and the use of hunters to pressure deer away from the vineyards were discussed and will be utilized.

Damage Prevention Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared and delivered damage prevention permits to two landowners in the Blackrock elk area.

Cougar Live Trap: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted Sargent Fulton and Officer Vance with preparing a cougar live trap located at the District 4 Office for use at cougar depredation event in the Starbuck area.

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 have volunteered at this location, and one elk was harvested this week in the area. Elk continue to persist in the large no-hunting area, and evidence of nearby feeding was located this week.



Elk below the elk fence in an area that does not allow hunting



Salting and watering location; no cattle are present in the area

Thorp Fencing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel delivered fencing to a commercial grower in Thorp this week. Fence construction will begin soon on the second phase of an existing cooperative fencing agreement. A general season buck hunter harvested at this location this week as well as a permit master hunter.

Materials for small fencing project delivered to location



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 met up with the survey crew and Sergeant Grant on access into the Naches Wonderland area to survey property boundaries for possible encroachment. The gate into the property was locked and after several hours of talking to property owners, contact was made with the owners of the parcels in question and permission was given to access the area to complete the surveys. The crew completed the survey in two days and confirmed encroachment. Acting Chief Surveyor Dabrowski will complete drawings in the next couple of weeks. Huffman also installed a “no unauthorized vehicles” sign along a trail to the river where landowners in the area have been driving down to the Tieton River.



Encroachment on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area as confirmed by the survey crew. The cyclone fence line on the left side of the pictures is property boundary. The two trailers plus landscaping have been constructed on the wildlife area.

Manager Huffman spent most of a day checking out roads and lands in the NF Cowiche Area and South of the Tieton River. Surprisingly Huffman found all Disco Pass signs still up, but one was being used for target practice. Huffman removed one temporary structure, but he will need

help removing a second large tarp structure along the NF Cowiche Creek. While walking along the creek, Huffman found numerous turkey tracks and saw one western gray squirrel.



Discover Pass sign at entrance to the wildlife area along the French's Road. The sign has numerous bullet holes and shot gun blasts, but was still up.



Tarp shelter located along the NF Cowiche Creek. As second larger structure was located upstream on the trees and will need assistance and more space than the Ranger to haul off.

Timber Sale Contract: Forester Mackey completed timber sale contract administration. Mackey freshened up unit boundaries, leave area boundaries, and road reconstruction flagging. Mackey met on site with the harvester and the road contractor for work to be done during the week of 10/5. Mackey delivered planking material for the protection of the South Fork Oak Creek Bridge when walking equipment across it this coming week. Road reconstruction was completed on Unit 7-1 and cutting completed on Units 5-1, 5-2, and 7-1. They are skidding and processing logs in Unit 5-2 and should be shipping logs to mills by 10/9.

Road Grading: Forester Mackey borrowed three portable water tanks from DNR to aid in road grading efforts on the 1400 Road the week of 10/5-10/9. Water sources are limited with low flows so tanks will be set up to allow for more water to be available for grading.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt and Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with Nicole Hurley (Archeologist representing BPA) for a Cultural Resource Review required by BPA prior to closing on the Ragland acquisition. Nicole did not find anything of concern, and her report will reflect that. Hopefully Leah Hendrix and Scott Nicolai will have the report within a couple weeks, and there will be no further obstacles to closing. This 15 acre acquisition will become a part of the L. T. Murray and has been a three year process for Leah and Scott already. Once closed, Manager Winegeart, Wetzel, Hunt, and others will begin planning/implementation for the reconfiguration of the elk fence at that site. The hope is to cure a chronic elk escape spot that has contributed to crop depredation on nearby agriculture lands, as well as elk occasionally crossing county roads and I-90.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Exotic Species Assessment: Staff from Districts 12 & 13 set traps to determine the presence of a deleterious species at an urban wetland. Trapping will continue this week to better assess the situation.

Pre-dawn retrieval of minnow traps used in amphibian assessment of a local wetland



Species of Greatest Conservation Needs: Biologist Milner collected two specimens of the Shaw Island vole from volunteers on Guemes Island. Tissue will be preserved for DNA analysis and the specimens will be donated to the Burke Museum.

Everett and Jim Creek Naval Installation Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan Annual Review: Biologist Milner spent a day with Navy environmental staff going over the review, which is required by the Federal Sikes Act. Progress of ongoing projects was reviewed and new ideas for the future were discussed.

Point Elliott Tribes Mountain Goat Meeting: Biologists Milner attended the mountain goat meeting which included staff from WDFW, Sauk Suiattle Tribe, Swinomish Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe, and USFS. Topics included 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.

Private Lands/Access Management

Snohomish County Farmland Conservation: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell, Regional Program Manager Link, District Biologist Milner, Wildlife Area Manager Boehm, Realty Specialist Iris, and PCC Farmland Trust representatives performed a site visit with a landowner in Snohomish County who is interested in farmland conservation and wildlife recreation activities.

Wildlife Areas

Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement: Construction continued on the replacement water control structure for Rainbow Pond on the Lake Terrell Unit. The old structure was removed, and the new structure set in place. The area around the control structure was filled in and this week the inlet pipes with beaver deceivers will be attached. This project is funded with Duck Stamp funds, and is being managed by Ducks Unlimited.



Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement

Nooksack Unit: Manager Kessler got out and took GPS data of the corn left standing on the Nooksack Unit. The local farmer is required to leave at least 10% of the 100 acres of corn that was planted. The corn is left in patterns that help spread out the birds, and help facilitate safe hunting. The exact total left this year has not been calculated yet, but it was obvious more than the required 10% was left.

Osprey Nesting Platforms Developed on Lake Terrell: The men from Canopy Conservation, who also star in the Animal Planet series Canopy Cat Rescue, were at the Lake Terrell Unit to develop two osprey nesting platforms and a perch tree. Canopy Conservation works to develop osprey nesting platforms using natural materials instead of putting old pallets or non-natural structures in the trees. One nest was built in a large incense cedar, and one in a very large Douglas fir tree close to the shores of Lake Terrell. The finished structures look like real nests in the tree tops, and hopefully will be used next nesting season. Another large Douglas fir in the same area was made into a perch tree.



Osprey Nesting Platforms developed at the Lake Terrell Unit

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed knotweed control at the west parking area.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted a version of the Region 4 Restoration Pathway that will be specific to PSNERP projects identified on WDFW lands. The document outlines decision points and a process for collecting input from WDFW staff

and stakeholders that will be submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers design team as projects progress through the design process. More information on the PSNERP project is available at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw entered a spending plan for a contract with Ducks Unlimited that reimburses WDFW for staff time spent working on the project.

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

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Pheasant Release: 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, Lake Terrell, Intalco, and British Petroleum.

Nooksack Unit Car Top Boat Launch Repair: Manager Kessler and Private Lands Biologist Chad Deyo worked to repair the car top boat launch at Silver Creek on the Nooksack Unit. They laid down quarry rock to make the site much safer and usable for area management and waterfowl hunting access.



Nooksack Unit Car Top Boat Launch Repair

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated a second bench construction project with Eagle Scout candidate Joey Lakey. Over 120 adult and scout volunteer hours were required to construct and install the benches. The next portion of the plan will be to have native trees and shrubs

planted near the area, replacing the blackberry and reed canary grass. This is scheduled for later this month and the project will be managed by another Eagle Scout candidate.

Bench construction project by Eagle Scout candidate

Samish Unit: Cosgrove and Meis checked all water control structures and butterfly values on the Samish Unit to ensure they are closed to capture water for the waterfowl season. Meis checked duck blinds assigned to volunteers to be brushed up for the hunting season.



Island Unit: Cosgrove mowed low field areas of grass and cattails on the Island Unit for the final time before waterfowl season begins. Cosgrove used the weed-eater around a footbridge and water control structure on the Island Unit to improve access. Cosgrove made a wooden platform for a duck blind on the Island Unit.

Leque Island: Cosgrove and Meis posted two "No Parking" signs and moved the Safety Zone signs following the corn harvest on the Leque Island Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

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

418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Wingard drove through Sierra Pacific Industries property participating in the special permit elk hunt. Biologist Wingard observed plentiful elk sign including trails and rub trees but did not observe any elk. Several ruffed grouse and many varied thrushes were

spotted along the roads. Biologist Wingard made contact with one of the muzzleloader permit holders while on Sierra Pacific land. The hunter was enjoying his time hunting elk in the area.

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

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal transported fencing material to a landowner in Friday Harbor on San Juan Island who has had chronic deer damage. The landowner is currently clearing his land and has hired a work crew to install the materials. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal and a Master Hunter volunteer completed an elk exclusionary fence in the Day Creek area of Skagit County. This marks the second major fencing project completed this year in the Day Creek area with assistance from Master Hunter volunteers and Tribal Co-Managers. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a complaint for deer damage to a raspberry crop in Whatcom County. Witman responded and renewed and ongoing wildlife damage prevention contract with the landowner.



Newly Constructed Elk Exclusionary Fencing in Day Creek

Region 4 (D12) Ungulate Damage:

Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, Christmas trees, gardens, and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith removed the remainder of one electrified fladry fence and discussed moving another to better exclude elk from dairy fields. Volunteer Master Hunter help will be utilized for this task in the coming weeks. Smith also entered several signed DPCAs into Novatus for review.



Electrified fladry fence excluding elk from crops in King County

Urban Raccoons: Biologist Smith provided information to a King County resident with raccoons living in the yard. The reporting party was advised to feed the “abandoned” cat (living in the yard) indoors and was referred to the living with wildlife species fact sheets for more information (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/>).

Wildlife Management Education: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman attended the Skagit County Festival of Family Farms. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman was invited to Hemlock Highlands Cattle Company to answer questions about how Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is managing elk damage in Skagit Valley in cooperation with farmers and private landowners. Over 400 people attended the event while Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman was in attendance. Many questions were fielded as to the elk herd population and distribution.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman with owners of Hemlock Highlands Cattle Company John and Jeanne Bates



Landowner John Bates speaking to guests about farming practices and working in cooperation with WDFW to manage elk

Hunting Season Preparation: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo met with multiple landowners to sign hunting access contracts for the 2015/16 waterfowl season. Biologist Wingard, Otto, and Deyo spent time going through the regional hunting sites in the GoHunt system to ensure the information is correct. Biologist Wingard then submitted sites for approval on the GoHunt website. Biologist Wingard and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell fielded multiple inquiries on the status of the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. They assured the hunters that the program was still active and sites would be on the GoHunt website soon. Biologist Wingard and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell also met with a landowner in Skagit County to pick up Waterfowl Quality Hunt contract paperwork and discussed future long-term agreements. Additional meetings will take place in the coming weeks with various landowners to discuss and negotiate future long-term contract agreements that would allow public access for various recreational activities.



Private Land Access staff installed a new gate at a Whatcom County Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site. This new gate will help prevent unauthorized access and notify hunters of site rules.

418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Wingard made arrangements with multiple hunters with modern firearm permits to pass out Sierra Pacific keys. Biologist Wingard also met with a successful muzzleloader permit holder to receive the key and obtain a tooth sample from the harvested animal. The successful hunter expressed great satisfaction with the hunting opportunity,

quality of the hunt, and the abundance of wildlife in the region.

Skagit Headquarters: Cosgrove coordinated with a representative of the local Washington Waterfowl Association chapter regarding a tour that Cosgrove will be leading on the Island Unit on Saturday the event was well attended. Cosgrove sprayed weeds at the Headquarters Unit parking area and Moberg Road driveway.

Fir Island Farms: Cosgrove removed Game Reserve signs from the Hayton Reserve on Fir Island. Rotton, Meis, and Cosgrove met with CAMP personnel, and Project Manager Jenna Friebel at FIF to discuss closing off the construction area and allowing the public back on the reserve to view shorebirds, waterfowl, and snow geese.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated six new hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Lance Chaar to hold an online field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Chief Instructor Chaar 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 added four new instructors into Kalkomey after they had completed the requirements to be certified.

Customer Service: With the hunting season upon us, Coordinator Dazey researched and answered many questions ranging from lost Orange cards, cards not received, lost cards for students who have moved out of state, hunter education deferrals, and students looking for assistance to sign up for hunter education classes.

Master Hunter: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey answered a request to recruit a standby team of master hunters to assist enforcement as on call to skin a bear if needed. The skins will be donated to NGO to use for educational purposes. Volunteer Coordinator Dazey continues to refer volunteers to the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager.

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

Washington State Cultural Resources Training: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton participated in a training course designed to teach staff who manage projects on state lands about regulations and permitting related to preservation of cultural resources and archaeological artifacts.

Staff visited Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve on Whidbey Island as part of the Washington State Cultural Resources Training. In the foreground is a blockhouse built by the Ebey family in the late 1800s and in the background is the original Ebey homestead overlooking Admiralty Inlet.



Quality Assurance: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell conducted quality control and quality assurance actions on Private Land Access Program budget matters, GoHunt website limitations, and Hunt by Reservation system evaluations.

Leadership Training: Biologist Yarborough completed Leadership Training I Module 3 – Employee Performance Management.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Project: Biologists Anderson and Bergh have been working with Volunteer Frank Slavens to continue with our efforts to control the bullfrog population adjacent to the WDFW Sondno Ranch western pond turtle site in Klickitat County. Frank has continued to work on bullfrog control on his adjacent property with the placement of a fyke net to capture adult and juvenile bullfrogs. In addition, a drift fence has been constructed around the Slavens pond to attempt to trap adult bullfrogs that might move from the permanent water source. Frank has removed an additional total of 1,239 tadpoles, 196 juveniles, and six adult bullfrogs since he started using the fyke net.



Fyke Net



Drift Net

Klickitat Wildlife Area: Staff completed general maintenance around the office and shop. They irrigated and watered trees and the admin area lawn, and started/ran equipment, trucks, ATVs, and tractors. Staff placed trickle chargers on a tractor and an ATV. Staff repaired the fence at the Swale Creek Unit at two creek crossings, taking advantage of very low water. They applied herbicides at the Hatchery Unit for reed canary grass, patrolled the Klickitat Wildlife Area checking camping areas and removing fire rings and trash, and checked for cattle trespass around water sources in the sheep canyon area. Staff responded to a Klickitat Wildlife Area visitor's concern about off-road driving in the north breaks area (driving around gate). We confirmed someone had driven around the gate and placed some small logs across the bypass area.

Access

Barbers: A large dump of paints, solvents, or unknown liquids, along with several garbage bags full of trash, was located at this Clark County site. Receipts and names were scattered around and taped onto the containers. The area was taped off with caution tape and enforcement was contacted to investigate. Enforcement is contacting the company on the receipts.



*Dump at Barber's Access –
Clark County*

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

D-9 Wildlife Conflict

Bear Damage: Conflict Specialist Peterson met with a land owner in Brush Prairie who is experiencing frequent bear damage to his fruit trees. The bear has been ripping down an eight foot tall elk fence and stripping the trees nightly. The landowner has agreed to purchase an electrified bear net-fence and we will help install and monitor it to determine its effectiveness and implementation for future bear conflicts.

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Cougar: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a depredation of sheep on a farm in West Cowlitz County. Conklin has been working with this landowner on other recent depredations where sheep have been coming up missing. Conklin confirmed tracks and a cache of a sheep on the last depredation. Conklin called a hound hunter that attempted to track the cat but was unsuccessful. A depredation permit was issued to remove the cougar.

Bear: Conflict Specialist Conklin followed up on a bear complaint that was reported through Washington State Patrol and WDFW Police. A resident had been walking her dogs near her home in a remote area near Kalama when she had observed a bear approximately 50 yards away. She avoided getting close to the bear. The bear began to walk toward her and came within yards of her. The bear was clicking her jaws and grunting at the walker, and in addition the bear was pushing on trees. The walker had a pistol and fired two rounds into the ground to scare the bear off. The bear did not retreat. The walker left the area and went back to her residence to tell her husband. The two of them went back to the same area and saw the bear again with two cubs. They were concerned the bear had little fear of them. Conklin walked the same area and hazed with bird bangers. The area has been heavily used by the bears. No obvious attractants existed near the home of the walkers and all hope that this particular incident is an isolated one. Conklin advised they place a trail camera up to see if the bear is coming close to the residence. Also critter gitter alarm systems were mounted on a goat pen to hopefully deter the bear.

Injured/Sick Deer: Biologist Stephens and Holman responded to contact from citizens in northern Clark County reporting a deer behaving strangely. The reporting parties believed that the animal may be blind. It was observed walking in circles, standing in a roadway, and running into things. Upon investigation, the animal was immobilized, removed, and euthanized. Samples have been submitted to WSU for analysis.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

South Puget Sound Airport and Federal Lands Streaked Horned Lark Working Group:

Biologist Tirhi and Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) Biologist Anderson co-hosted the second 2015 working group meeting, held at the Port of Olympia. The working group generally meets twice per year to collectively work on management issues associated with state and federally listed streaked horned lark. This is an open forum format in which the members brainstorm solutions to site management activities impacting larks. This month's meeting



opened with a review of this year's survey results, then lark breeding phenology and vulnerability to mowing, and finally a brainstorming session on how to replace non-native and high-maintenance grasses at occupied sites with low-maintenance natives.

State endangered and federally threatened streaked horned lark

Grass Creek Unit: Biologist Novack visited parcels of the Grass Creek Wildlife Area Unit off SR 109. He discovered that one parcel, located off Kessler Lane, was being used by a

number of cows and horses. According to Wildlife Area Manager Gerchak, the property is not open for grazing. After conferring with Property and Acquisition Specialist Cannon and Regional Program Manager Calkins, Novack attempted to contact the adjacent landowner to direct them to remove the animals.

Private Lands /Conflict

Deer Rescue: Conflict Specialist Blankenship received a report that a deer fawn was stuck in a fence near a gated community in Belfair. Blankenship arrived on scene and found that the deer fawn tried to squeeze its way through the bars of an iron gate and could not get its backside through. The deer was extremely exhausted from struggling to get through the fence. Through the struggle of trying to fit through the fence, minor injuries were beginning to show up. Blankenship was able to cover the head of the deer with a blanket and work the deer fawn free from the fence. The reporting party contacted Blankenship later in the day to say that they saw the deer up and moving around back with its mother.

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

Wildlife Management:

Big Game Seasons – Field Contacts: Biologist Michaelis spent time on Sunday, October 4th locating and contacting hunters in areas leading into the Williams Creek Game Management Unit (GMU 673). This year is the first of a 3-point and better muzzleloader elk season in many GMUs across the state. Hunter participation appeared to be low and only one branched antlered bull harvested in GMU 506 was checked.

Biologist Novack surveyed the Quinault river valley and GMU 618. One rifle tag permittee was located with a fresh 5-point bull. Biologist Novack discussed the restrictions around Elk Area 6064 and solicited the opinion of a half-dozen hunters about current management. Biologist Novack also visited the Park Service ranger station and obtained clarification on the National Park Service regulations that can affect hunters who want to cross over NPS property to get to open land.

Nemah Access Site Visit and Willapa Bay Tour: Biologist Michaelis gave Regional Program Manager Calkins a site visit to the access site being created by WDFW within the next few months. Additional improvements to the site were discussed and included a foot trail along the northern portion of WDFW property linking it further to the west with land owned by the Columbia River Land Trust. This site could provide tremendous opportunities in the future for a variety of consumptive and non-consumptive use. In addition, he took the opportunity to show Calkins many of the major dusky Canada goose survey/congregation areas. They also visited some prospective land acquisitions.

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

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gopher Set Aside Landowner Engagement: Biologist Lutey attended the Thurston County Planners Meeting to explain a current grant WDFW obtained to work directly with landowners who have properties on which listed Mazama pocket gophers occupy. During development of these sites, several of these landowners were required to set aside a portion of their property as gopher habitat that could not be developed. The grant provides funds for WDFW and the county to work with these landowners to enhance/restore the habitat in those areas set aside for the benefit of gophers and other prairie obligate species. The first step in this process is to determine where in the county each of these set aside areas exist. After explaining the project to the planning meeting, Thurston County assigned a staff assistant to work with the planners to locate each of the plans for these site projects, make a copy of the plan, and provide it to Suzy for the creation of a central repository. The next step will be to create a GIS map locating each of the project sites. Finally, a letter will be sent to each of the landowners from the county

introducing the project, followed by a site visit by a county/WDFW staff member. Inventories of habitat will be conducted and initial habitat work will be scheduled.

***State and federally threatened
Mazama Pocket Gopher***

Bats: Biologist Tirhi met with three staff members of the Western State Hospital in Lakewood and Citizen Science Coordinator Hawn from Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium to tour five locations on the hospital grounds that have been used as a roost sites by at least two bat species colonies for several years. Biologist Tirhi assisted hospital maintenance



manager Bromley with bat housing at one of the locations 18 years ago in order to concentrate the bats into housing to reduce the amount of area bats were using and the mess they were creating. That housing is now to capacity and needs to be enlarged. Meanwhile, bats are roosting between wall paneling in a second location and roosting in the attics of three additional buildings. Occasionally, the bats make their way into the offices and stairwells used by staff and patients. The hospital was founded in 1871 and all new buildings were erected in 1887. All or part of many of those original buildings remains today. Due to the size of the grounds (264 acres) and the number and age of the buildings, excluding bats completely is not an option and so the bats will need to be managed. Biologist Tirhi was contacted again by the hospital to assist with solutions and Tirhi enlisted the help of Coordinator Hawn. This first meeting was to collect information and photos on the various locations being used by bats. A follow up meeting will take place later this month to brainstorm solutions, including construction and placement of more housing with funneling systems designed to funnel bats into housing, exclusion of bats from wall spaces and certain crawl spaces, and determining species using the site. Citizen scientists will be used to construct and place housing, monitor bat use, and assist with research, but will not be handling bats due to health concerns.

***Western State Hospital ground
layout.***



Private Lands /Conflict:

Bear Complaints: Conflict Specialist Blankenship has received multiple reports of bears causing conflicts with homeowners throughout Region 6. Most complaints come from homeowners who are having problems with bears getting into fruit trees and bird feeders. The drought this year has brought with it a bad year for the bears primary source of food, berries. Without any berries, the bears often try to find alternative sources of food to sustain their diet of up to 20,000 calories in a single day. Bird feeders, fruit trees, and garbage are an easy meal and major source of calories for these bears, and often cause conflict with homeowners. Blankenship advises that homeowners who are having bear problems remove all attractants, which would include all fruit from fruit trees and fruit that has dropped on the ground, remove all bird feeders, and keep garbage inside an enclosure where it is not easily accessible. Simply removing these attractants will cause the bear to search for other sources of food in more suitable areas.