

LAND LINE

A Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife land management newsletter

Fall 2007

State invests in wildlife habitat and viewing access

By Jeff Koenings, Ph.D. WDFW Director

An unprecedented investment in wildlife habitat and viewing access was part of the 2007-09 state budget, thanks to Gov. Chris Gregoire and the Washington Legislature.

A total of \$100 million for grants administered by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) was approved to fund critical wildlife habitat and natural area acquisitions, state land restoration and enhancement, park and trail development and riparian protection.

The single biggest WWRP project for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is acquisition of one of the largest remaining areas of undeveloped shrub-steppe habitat in our state— 25,000 acres of the Skookumchuck watershed, located between the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick wildlife areas in Kittitas County.

Home to sage grouse, jackrabbits, golden eagles, elk, bighorn sheep, wild steelhead and other species, this property 12 miles east of Ellensburg

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New conduct rules for wildlife areas are on Commission October agenda

New rules about public conduct on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) wildlife areas and water access sites to protect fish and wildlife and ensure public safety will be considered for adoption by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in October.

The rules address use of aircraft, camping, commercial activity, dumping and sanitation, erecting structures, firearms and target shooting, fireworks, land and road closures, livestock, parking, pets, resource removal, vehicle use, and other issues.

The rules were initially developed over several years of work with WDFW's statewide Land Management Advisory Council and individual wildlife area citizen advisory groups to address changes in type and volume of use of wildlife properties.

Following WDFW's dual mandate, most WDFW acquisitions of wildlife areas are made first to protect fish and wildlife and their habitat, and second to provide public fish and wildlife recreational access.

The primary purposes for public use of WDFW-owned or controlled lands are hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and other fish and wildlife-oriented recreational or educational activities. All other uses are secondary and can be restricted or prohibited.

Although some rules governing use are already on the books, the new set of rules now under consideration are compiled into one new chapter (13) in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 232 for ease of enforcement.

"Some of the use of our lands has gone way beyond what they were intended

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Land Line is produced by the Lands Division and Public Affairs Office of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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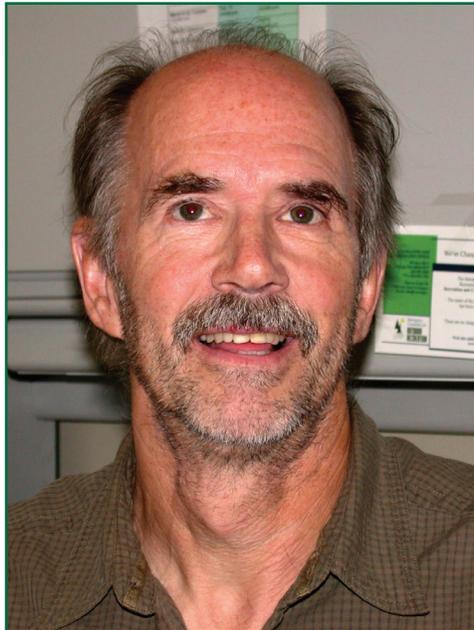
Lands Division manager Mark Quinn retires

Editor's Note: After 31 years of public service, WDFW's Lands Division Manager Mark Quinn is retiring at the end of September. The following is his own recollection of his career.

I began my fish and wildlife career in 1976 as a seasonal employee on the McNary Wildlife Area in the Tri-Cities area and was fortunate just two months later to be selected manager for the Wooten Wildlife Area in southeast Washington. It was a dream come true. Like many people who land their first job with fish and wildlife, I couldn't believe they were going to pay me for living on the Tucannon River and taking care of a 12,000-acre "game range," as they were known then.

Reality set in a couple months later when 4,000 fishermen descended on the Tucannon for the opening of fishing season. They were interested in a lot of partying and a little bit of fishing. I spent almost three years on the Wooten and spent a good portion of my time managing the public, not wildlife.

One notable event occurred that I was sure was going to cost me my job. My assistant and I were repairing elk fence up Cummings Creek when the old (very old - I think it had bullet holes in it from WW II) Dodge power wagon we were driving started a fire. By the time we realized we wouldn't be able to put it out and had raced to the headquarters to call the DNR and Forest Service, the fire was sending up a huge black plume of smoke. That evening, airplanes were dropping retardant and DNR and Forest Service crews had arrived to begin a coordinated ground attack. The fire



burned about 2,300 acres, mostly grass and brush. I didn't lose my job but I did end up with a new truck.

I took over as manager of the McNary Wildlife Area in 1978. I managed waterfowl adjacent to the McNary National Wildlife Refuge and really got an education, not only about waterfowl but about the federal refuge system.

In 1981 I was hired to manage the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area in Moses Lake. That was a major change in scale as the Columbia Basin was over 200,000 acres and spread from Grand Coulee Dam to the Tri-Cities. There were many parts of that area that I never even got to in the four years I was manager.

In 1984 I took over as the regional wildlife program manager in the northcentral Washington region. I was responsible for five large wildlife areas and all of the other wildlife management activities in that five-county region. I was very involved in the department's

land acquisition program, which saw a huge infusion of funds after the Legislature passed the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

In 1989 I left the department to take a job as Natural Resources and Re-licensing Manager for the Grant County Public Utilities District. It didn't take me long to realize that my heart was still with fish and wildlife and I returned to WDFW a year later.

In 2001 I took an assignment as Lands Division Manager in Olympia where I have been ever since.

As I reflect on my career, I am most proud of my work on land acquisitions. Although land acquisition is controversial and at times acrimonious, the long term benefits to the state of Washington and its fish and wildlife, from permanently protecting land through fee simple acquisition and conservation easements, is undeniable. Those lands will provide Washington with economic, environmental, and recreational benefits forever. The establishment of wildlife area plans is another very important accomplishment for WDFW lands. We now have the tool we need to move forward with building a better and more sustainable infrastructure for WDFW lands.

I've met many dedicated people throughout my career, including both employees and members of the public who are very committed to protecting and preserving Washington's natural landscapes. I will now be a member of the latter as a retiree with just slightly more time to spend enjoying some of the fruits of my labor on WDFW lands.

Counties receive tax payments

This year WDFW completed annual payments to 30 of Washington's 39 counties totaling \$680,160.29 for Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and local assessments on WDFW-owned land.

The PILT totaled \$445,448.02 to 14 counties covering 450,478.57 acres of WDFW-owned land. Assessments totaled \$234,712.27 to 27 counties for weed control, fire protection, storm water control, irrigation, and other services provided by lake management districts and conservation districts.

WDFW is the only state agency that makes in-lieu tax payments on property it owns and manages.

Each county can either retain game violation fines and forfeitures collected by WDFW within the county, or elect to receive in lieu taxes on WDFW property of at least 100 contiguous acres. (PILT is not paid on department buildings, structures, facilities, game farms, fish hatcheries, tidelands, or public fishing areas of less than 100 acres.)

Most counties that have significant WDFW acreage choose to receive the in lieu payments. In most cases, the payments are equivalent to or more than counties would receive if the property was privately owned and held in open space classification for agriculture or forestry activities.

By state law (Revised Code of Washington 77.12.203), counties electing to collect PILT have their choice of three rates. They may collect an amount equal to that amount paid on similar parcels of private land held in open space tax classification, or counties may collect the greater of 70 cents per acre or the amount paid in 1984.

The table shown here lists the Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT), based on the number of acres eligible for PILT, and assessment payments that counties received from WDFW this year. Counties with WDFW acreage that are not listed or show no payment, have either not billed the agency for service assessments

and/or have chosen to retain game violation fines rather than in lieu taxes. Variations in the taxes per listed acreages may indicate that not all acres are taxed and/or that not all are computed at the same rate. Assessments vary from county to county.

County	PILT	PILT Acres	Assessments	Grand Total
Adams	\$0.00		\$12,755.65	\$12,755.65
Asotin	\$26,538.15	35,582.14	\$0.00	\$26,538.15
Benton	\$0.00		\$3,014.26	\$3,014.26
Chelan	\$18,738.46	26,769.24	\$1,346.77	\$20,085.23
Clallam	\$0.00		\$1,605.66	\$1,605.66
Clark	\$0.00		\$8,859.70	\$8,859.70
Columbia	\$7,779.91	11,114.13	\$1,664.20	\$9,444.11
Cowlitz	\$0.00		\$655.38	\$655.38
Ferry	\$6,781.33	6,866.13	\$705.10	\$7,486.43
Franklin	\$0.00		\$751.45	\$751.45
Garfield	\$4,839.98	6,914.26	\$553.14	\$5,393.12
Grant	\$37,443.16	39,076.00	\$26,612.04	\$64,055.20
Grays Harbor	\$7,264.14	3,248.00	\$0.00	\$7,264.14
King	\$0.00		\$31,502.69	\$31,502.69
Kitsap	\$0.00		\$1,373.16	\$1,373.16
Kittitas	\$116,574.36	149,712.22	\$8,239.37	\$124,813.73
Klickitat	\$21,416.95	13,106.35	\$754.36	\$22,171.31
Lincoln	\$13,535.41	19,339.50	\$1,921.58	\$15,456.99
Mason	\$0.00		\$450.00	\$450.00
Okanogan	\$77,227.19	62,613.54	\$9,276.35	\$86,503.54
Pacific	\$0.00		\$531.46	\$531.46
Pend Orielle	\$3,308.65	614.00	\$0.00	\$3,308.65
Pierce	\$0.00		\$7,350.80	\$7,350.80
Skagit	\$0.00		\$28,705.93	\$28,705.93
Snohomish	\$0.00		\$12,468.06	\$12,468.06
Spokane	\$0.00		\$1,149.97	\$1,149.97
Thurston	\$6,088.45	1,131.13	\$21,598.88	\$27,687.33
Walla Walla	\$0.00		\$12.00	\$12.00
Whatcom	\$0.00		\$149.17	\$149.17
Yakima	\$97,911.88	74,391.93	\$50,705.14	\$148,617.02
Totals	\$445,448.02	450,478.57	\$234,712.27	\$680,160.29

Washington's Wildlife Areas: L.T. Murray

The L.T. Murray Wildlife Area in central Washington's Kittitas County, managed with the Quilomene, Whiskey Dick, and Skookumchuck units, is the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) largest wildlife area complex with a total of 105,863 acres.

Shrub-steppe, forest, riparian, and talus/cliff areas across that acreage provide winter range for deer and elk, cougar and bear, habitat for upland birds, falcons, eagles, bats, and many small mammals. The area also provides diverse recreational opportunities including hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and camping.

The L.T. Murray, west of Ellensburg is named for Ellensburg rancher and logger Lowell T. Murray, who sold the original 39,305 acres west of Ellensburg to the state in 1968. The then Department of Game used federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and state Inter-Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) funds to make the purchase. Another 14,424 acres of Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land is currently under WDFW management along with a 341-acre parcel of U.S. Forest Service land.

Northeast of Ellensburg, and about 35 miles away from the Murray are the



46,352 acres of the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas. Most of the WDFW-owned rangeland in the Quilomene unit was purchased in 1962, with the Whiskey Dick purchase following in 1966. Both units are interspersed with DNR and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ownership that is managed as part of the wildlife areas. In the last year, 8,150 acres of the Skookumchuck drainage were acquired by WDFW with IAC funds to provide a much-needed connection between the

Quilomene and Whiskey Dick units. IAC-funded acquisition of another 9,432 acres in the Skookumchuck is expected to occur later this year.

A large-scale WDFW-DNR land exchange including the L.T. Murray, Quilomene and Whiskey Dick areas is also underway that would block up ownership for both agencies, with WDFW gaining shrub-steppe acreage.

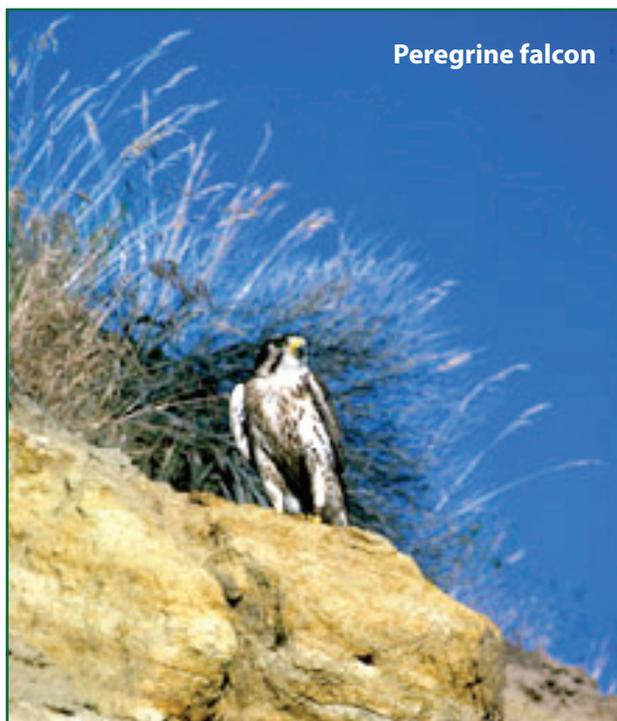
WDFW area manager Cindi Confer also manages the Wenas Wildlife Area for a grand total of 211,324 acres in Kittitas and Yakima counties. Confer

says the greatest attribute of such a vast landscape is the contiguous and sustainable habitat for wildlife and opportunities for relatively remote wildlife recreation.

The shrub-steppe habitat, mostly sagebrush, bitterbrush and various bunchgrasses, includes some of the best left in the state. More than 100 bird species forage and nest in this habitat, many of management concern like sage grouse, sage thrasher, sage sparrow and Brewer's sparrow. A state endangered species, the sage grouse is dependent on maintenance of shrub-steppe on this wildlife area complex because it links northern populations with southern ones.

Shrub-steppe is also used on the L.T. Murray complex by mule deer and two mammal candidates for species protection listing -- black-tailed and white-tailed jackrabbits.

A large portion of the L.T. Murray property west of Ellensburg is forested habitat adjacent to more of the same in the Wenatchee/Okanogan National Forest. The northern portion of the Yakima elk herd uses this area throughout the year. Winter feeding of elk is conducted at the Joe Watt and Robinson portions of the area to help sustain the population and prevent agricultural damage on adjacent private



Peregrine falcon

Doug Kuehn photo

Washington's Wildlife Areas: L.T. Murray, *cont. from page 4*

Golden eagle



Doug Kuehn photo

lands. Elk from the Colockum herd use winter range on the Whiskey Dick and Quilomene units.

Forest habitat also supports mule deer, blue and ruffed grouse, and a host of non-game species. Historically the higher elevation forest with older timber stands supported goshawks, pileated woodpeckers and spotted owls, and lower elevation forest with ponderosa pine and Douglas fir supported species such as the white-headed woodpecker and pygmy nuthatch. Timber harvest as a condition of property sale reduced that habitat, but WDFW's current timber management is designed to restore the forest's full potential for a diversity of wildlife.

Many fish-bearing streams flow through Taneum and Manastash canyons to the Yakima River on the L.T. Murray, and Quilomene and Whiskey

Dick creeks drain those watersheds directly into the Columbia River. Most support resident trout and some have remnant populations of steelhead that are currently federally listed as threatened. The streamside or riparian habitat is extensive and supports elk and deer, sage and forest grouse, neotropical songbirds, and reptiles and amphibians.

Many areas, particularly the Quilomene, Whiskey Dick and Skookumchuck, include exposed rock or talus/cliff features that provide security, nesting, and foraging habitat for bighorn sheep, golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and the introduced game species chukar.

Confer says the greatest challenges of managing such an expanse of habitat types on the wildlife area are addressing the diversity of issues and meeting the wide range of needs.

"We have a good Citizens Advisory Group that works with us on all the Kittitas and Yakima county wildlife areas," she said. "They've helped us identify needs in road management, weed control, recreational access, grazing, fence maintenance, winter range protection, fire management, and other areas."

Grazing, exotic plant invasions, fire protection and wildfire have altered the L.T. Murray's plant community

White-headed woodpecker



Doug Kuehn photo

significantly over the years and drive much of WDFW staff work. Historically, nearly all the areas had intensive livestock grazing before WDFW ownership or management. Grazing rights were reserved for ten years as a condition of sale of the L.T. Murray acreage. Research was conducted to determine impacts of livestock grazing on various units, and grazing was gradually reduced or discontinued where it was not compatible with wildlife and habitat objectives.

Vigorous fire protection, development of ladder fuels, over-stocking, and insect and disease infestations have made timber stands on the L.T. Murray susceptible to wildfires. Several small fires have burned a little over 600 acres since 1994, but fortunately the area has escaped a truly devastating wildfire. Timber thinning and prescribed burns are underway to reduce the risk.

Wildfires burned 7,000 acres of the Quilomene/Whiskey Dick area in 1976, with numerous small fires in recent years. Although fire is a natural part of grassland rejuvenation, fire can be critical in shrub-steppe habitat where sagebrush can be eradicated and replaced by non-native invasives. An emergency fire suppression agreement



Wintering elk

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Washington's Wildlife Areas: L.T. Murray *cont. from page 5*

between DNR and WDFW is in effect for these properties.

Less traditional issues are taking an increasing amount of time to address on the L.T. Murray, Confer says. Vandalism, reckless target shooting, and general abuse of the area are the impetus for some of the new, proposed rules of public conduct on WDFW properties that the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider adopting in October.

"Some of it comes with the territory," Confer said. "This is a big piece of public land with remote corners that has probably always drawn some abuse. But today we're seeing computers and old appliances blown up with automatic firearms and other extreme behavior that has nothing to do with hunting, wildlife viewing and the original reasons this land was acquired as a wildlife area."

Confer and just two other full-time staffers struggle to stay on top on all the tasks required to keep the L.T. Murray complex viable for both wildlife and recreationists. The staff shortage is probably the



Understory thinning for wildfire prevention

biggest overall problem, she says, and help from the public is vital. Cooperative efforts to solve problems are critical, like the Kittitas County Big Game Management Roundtable's work to address elk damage on private property adjacent to the wildlife area.

"The abundance of wildlife, habitats and issues is what makes the L.T. Murray such an interesting place to work," Confer said.



Sage grouse

Thomas G. Barnes photo

State invests in wildlife habitat and viewing access, *cont. from page 1*

was once considered a likely area for development. Instead, with \$4.67 million in WWRP funding, it will be preserved as critical habitat.

Other habitat and wildlife-viewing projects funded through WWRP include:

- First-phase acquisition of property on the west branch of the Little Spokane River to protect habitat for species ranging from moose to Townsend's big-eared bats; funded at \$3.6 million.
- Development of streamside wildlife-viewing facilities and stream restoration for endangered steelhead at Beebe Springs, a 185-acre property adjacent to WDFW's Chelan Fish Hatchery north of Chelan; funded at \$492,888.
- Development of wildlife viewing trails, blinds and interpretive signs, and

restoration of native grassland at the Reardan Audubon Lake Wildlife Area, a popular birding spot west of Spokane; funded at \$345,803.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife also received WWRP funding for a variety of other projects, ranging from spartina removal in five areas of Willapa Bay to prevent the invasive weed from crowding out fish and foraging shorebirds, to stabilizing stream banks at the Mount St. Helen's Wildlife Area to prevent the periodic loss of elk forage area and salmon spawning and rearing habitat.

These projects all represent a strategic investment in the future of fish and wildlife in Washington. In many cases, these habitat restoration efforts will help maintain the biodiversity of our state,

keeping "common species common." In other cases, these projects offer the best chance to preserve species that might otherwise be threatened with extinction.

Support for WWRP projects is just one example of the important investments in Washington's natural resources made during this year's legislative session. Another is Gov. Gregoire's plan for Puget Sound, which targets \$238 million to restore damaged shorelines, clean up pollution and reduce stormwater runoff.

Despite pressing budget demands, lawmakers clearly recognized the importance of protecting our natural environment and investing in the lands and facilities that support wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. These investments will benefit Washingtonians for a long time to come.

Tieton River Canyon protected with Nature Conservancy transfer

A four-year effort to protect more than 10,000 acres in the Tieton River Canyon was completed this year with the transfer of land from The Nature Conservancy to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The land was part of a checkerboard pattern of public and private ownership that is a legacy of 19th century land grants. It was acquired by the Conservancy from Plum Creek Timber Company and is now a part of WDFW's Oak Creek Wildlife Area. The alternating squares in the checkerboard remain in the ownership of the U.S. Forest Service, bringing the total public ownership in the area to more than 20,000 acres. The Nature Conservancy retains ownership of a square mile of land at the heart of the canyon.

The public/private effort conserves nearly eight miles of the Tieton River and all of the adjacent uplands. The Tieton River canyon supports mature Ponderosa pine forests, oak woodlands, intact shrub-steppe, riparian floodplains, and dense streamside stands of willow,

dogwood, and cottonwood. At least 15 species on the state endangered species list and four on the federal list are found there, including spotted and flammulated owls, nesting golden eagles, bighorn sheep, and steelhead and bull trout.

"This is a dream come true," said WDFW habitat biologist Ken Bevis, who was instrumental in the project. "This is the best thing I've worked on in my whole career. It's been such a successful partnership with The Nature Conservancy, and now we have protected this wonderful place."

Betsy Bloomfield, the Nature Conservancy program director who spearheaded the effort, noted that in addition to the partnership with WDFW, the support of the Yakima County Board of Commissioners was crucial to obtaining public funding for the project. She also said work on the project led to development of the multi-agency and organization Tieton Forest Collaborative to continue expanding shared vision for the area.

Shrub-steppe, Hood Canal get a little LIP



Shrub-steppe habitat

Landowners with shrub-steppe or Hood Canal area property can get a little LIP from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a competitive grant program designed to provide financial assistance to private landowners for the protection, enhancement or restoration of habitat to benefit species at risk on privately owned lands.

WDFW recently opened a grant cycle, with applications due by November 30, 2007, with a focus on areas with greater sage grouse shrub-steppe habitats and habitats that contribute to health of Hood Canal.

While projects in the two focus areas receive additional points during evaluation, applicants are encouraged to submit projects that benefit any species at risk on the landowner incentives list.

For further information or applications, see the LIP website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lip/index.htm>.

New conduct rules for wildlife areas, *cont. from page 1*

for," explains WDFW Lands Division Manager Mark Quinn. "We've got folks building virtual cabins and living in them beyond hunting seasons. We've got ATVs going where no motorized vehicles have gone before. We've got people dragging in old television sets and computers to use as exploding targets with automatic firearms and tracer shells. In a word, we've got abuse of these wildlife areas."

Quinn said that although he and the advisory council thought they had covered the gamut of issues, there were many strong opinions expressed by the general public when the first draft of the proposed new rules was released this spring. Most comment was on camping time limits during subsequent hunting seasons, target shooting restrictions, shed antler collection restrictions, pets, and resource removal.

Based on that input and Commission

review in June 2007, the proposals were revised to address those and other issues. The Commission reviewed the second draft at its August meeting and took further public input. Based on that review, further minor changes were made to make the rules easier to understand, such as clarifying the restrictions on hunting blinds and other structures.

The complete set of revised, proposed rules is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/proposed_wac_232-13.htm.

The proposal is undergoing a required State Environmental Policy Act review with a comment deadline of September 21 (for comment submission details see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>).

The Commission will take final public input and consider approval of public conduct rules at their Oct. 12-13, 2007 meeting in Olympia.

VEHICLE USE PERMIT



Buy Access to WDFW Areas

See: <http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/wdfw/vup.html>
for details

Sinlahekin butterfly count up

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) 14,000-acre Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in Okanogan County can now boast to being home to more different species of butterflies than most whole counties in the state.

Sinlahekin manager Dale Swedberg explains that this past summer six new species were documented by volunteer Tighe Stuart during butterfly surveys, bringing the total to 84 species.

According to butterfly species counts kept by county, that's over 71 percent of the butterfly species found in Okanogan County, the same number as in all of Asotin County, and more than what's found in 28 of Washington's 39 counties.

The new species are the lilac-bordered copper (*Lycaena nivalis*), arctic blue (*Agriades glandon*), hedgerow hairstreak (*Satyrrium saepium*), mormon fritillary (*Speyeria mormonia*), coronis fritillary (*Speyeria coronis*), and pink-edged sulphur (*Colias interior*).

Swedberg has photographed many of the butterflies on the Sinlahekin and next summer will try to capture images of the new-found species. More surveying then might also turn up even more species.

"Pretty amazing place, the Sinlahekin," he said. "Definitely worth a visit."



Two-tailed swallowtail



Common wood-nymph



Purplish copper



Lorquin's admiral

All photos taken by Dale Swedberg

This program receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the policy of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to adhere to the following: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, please contact the WDFW ADA Coordinator at 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 or write to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203