



Director's Report to the Commission

March 18-19, 2016

Habitat Program

Habitat Restoration and Protection Strategic Initiative

Habitat Program Restoration Division staff are negotiating a Cooperative Agreement with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agreement is worth up to \$30 million over five years. These funds are primarily pass-through dollars for grants for marine, nearshore, and upland habitat protection and restoration work. Final workplans are being negotiated and the agreement will be in place by early May 2016. The Department was chosen, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to lead the **Habitat Restoration and Protection Strategic Initiative**. The initiative is one of three chosen by the EPA and the Puget Sound Management Conference to guide restoration and protection of Puget Sound by 2020. As lead, the Department is responsible for assisting in the updates of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound, and developing a set of strategies to accelerate habitat restoration and recovery, and administer a grant program. We will develop and facilitate a Habitat Strategic Initiative Team composed of regional stakeholders, including local, state, tribal, and federal governments, nongovernmental organizations, academics, and other interested parties.

The award was based in part on the success of the current Cooperative Agreement worth \$20.5 million, resulting in about \$18.5 million in projects to protect and restore the marine and nearshore habitat.

New Informational Booklet for Marine Waterfront Landowners

Using EPA funds provided through the Department and DNR's Marine and Nearshore Grant Program, the Department has recently produced an informational booklet for marine waterfront landowners to help them understand their waterfront property and the choices they have when considering how to address erosion concerns. The booklet, *Your Marine Waterfront: A guide to protecting your property while promoting healthy shorelines*, is available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01791/>, and hard copies will be available for distribution in late March 2016.

The development of this booklet addresses a communication void with property owners and will further our state's ability to achieve restoration targets set by the Puget Sound Partnership related to shoreline armoring in Puget Sound. Concepts presented in this booklet are a distillation of the 2014 Marine Shoreline Design Guidelines (MSDG) technical guidance document (also funded with EPA funds) which is part of the Aquatic Habitat Guidelines series. <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01583/>.

Enforcement Program

Boating Safety

Department Officers are the primary boating safety law enforcement presence in our state, and the program receives funding directly from State Parks for this purpose. Recognizing that drunk boaters become drunk drivers, Enforcement Program staff met with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to discuss details of a media plan that compliments the Target Zero Initiative, which is to reduce traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. The Commission is leveraging over \$1 million in a safe driving advertising campaign to build in responsible boating messages where possible. State Parks is excited about the opportunity and offered to pay a share of some billboard-style signage that compliments the campaign. Billboards will have boating under the influence (BUI)/driving under the influence (DUI) messaging.

In a separate but related example of multi-agency partnership, the Traffic Safety Commission awarded the Department \$10,000 to fund a breathalyzer machine in a BUI processing trailer purchased by State Parks. The Department has finalized the design phase and the trailer is currently being built under our guidance. This badly needed resource will be ready in time for summer boating season for use by a variety of law enforcement partners.

Capital and Asset Management Program

Beebe Springs Ribbon Cutting Event

The Department of Fish and Wildlife will be conducting a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, April 9 at 1:00 p.m. to celebrate the completion of the Beebe Springs Natural Area project. The Beebe Springs area is located on the Columbia River upstream from the Highway 97 bridge and adjacent to the Chelan Falls Hatchery.

The Department purchased the 227-acre property in 2003 with a vision to restore riparian and shrub-steppe habitat and develop a trail system through the area. The project was completed in five phases:

- Construction of a new meandering creek channel with riparian trees and shrubs.
- Columbia River shoreline enhancements; shrub-steppe and wetland habitat restoration; trails; highway access and parking; and interpretive signage.
- Expansion of shoreline enhancements and habitat restoration; and the addition of 1,500 feet of trails.
- Native plant restoration; invasive species eradication; pedestrian bridges; wood rail fencing; benches; and access improvements.
- Construction of a children's fishing pond and additional interpretive signage.

Fish Program

North of Falcon

Legislative Update