

Wildlife Program

Week of July 7-13, 2014

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Lowe was contacted by a concerned resident of Lincoln about an apparent lack of lambs in the herd this season. Lowe toured the area with the resident. No sheep were observed in the Lincoln Cliffs, but 23 (12 ewes, 7 lambs, and 4 young rams) were spotted in the cliffs near Whitestone Rock.

Bighorn Sheep: On Tuesday, two young bighorn rams were observed on the edge of Asotin near some domestic goats. On Tuesday afternoon, DB Wik was able to successfully dart one of the 2 with the help of Officer Sabo and biologist Woodall. The other ram was able to escape for that day, but did have an eartag from a previous capture this winter. For the following 4 days, WDFW (Wik and Vekasy) and IDFG (Cassirer) staff attempted to capture and sample this young ram without success.

Wildlife Areas

WT Wooten WA – LW Projects: The contractors continued bringing in material to stockpile for PA 14 and the Lacey Construction crew continued staging the material near where the log jams will be constructed in the river. The helicopter arrived and trees were placed in the Tucannon River in PA 3. July 15 is the start of the work window for the in-stream portions of all of the projects. Work to construct the access road in PA 15 began this week. A portion of the in-stream work will take place this year and the rest will occur next year.

Helicopter placing trees in the river adjacent to Campground 9. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are the sponsors of the project.





New access road being constructed on the Russell Unit of the Wooten Wildlife Area in preparation for the LW project in PA 15.

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

Private Lands/Access



Private Lands Access: Natural Resource Worker Wade continued to conduct early morning and late evening hazing efforts south of Pomeroy in Garfield and Asotin Counties. A group of nice bulls was hazed from an agricultural field. Wade also came across a “new” group of cows and calves this week which left him wondering if there is a new hole in the Elk Fence somewhere. NRW Wade will be checking the fence to see.

Group of bulls south of Peola just before hazing them out of the field

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

Wildlife Management

Regional Awards Meeting and Breakout Session: Conflict Specialist Bennett attended the Regional Awards Meeting and Wildlife Break-Out Session where she received an award for the Moose Response Team and Esprit de Corps.

Region One Team Award for Moose Team Response in 2013



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker spent time in the field with the range rider. They checked a trail camera the range rider installed in an area where he believes there is wolf activity. So far, a bear and a couple of deer visited the site. The trail camera is still in place. The range rider also showed Specialist Heilhecker around Finley canyon and suggested areas to hike to look for wolf activity.

Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Feasibility: Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei met with US Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Newsome to plan and coordinate refuge efforts to determine habitat suitability at a potential release site on the refuge and to coordinate the upcoming Northern Leopard Frog capture efforts planned for this August and early parts of September. Newsome is assisting with volunteer recruitment and providing assistance of temporary staff for amphibian DNA sampling and migratory bird banding. Biologist Duvuvuei and Finger opportunistically collected DNA swabs for Chytrids fungus from 25 spadefoot toad metamorphs in the Gloyd Seeps Subunit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. This was an opportunity to make some progress with our sampling quota and to get the methods squared away prior to bigger efforts coming up in August. The sampling process was a good learning experience and good start with the feasibility project. Biologist Duvuvuei began coordinating with the Zoologig lab about sample storage, shipping, and processing.

Wildlife Areas

Mills Canyon Fire: An otherwise routine week was interrupted around noon on Tuesday with structure fire that turned into a wildland fire in Mills Canyon near Entiat. By late afternoon a column of smoke was visible throughout the area. By Wednesday morning the fire was approaching the northern boundary of the Swakane Unit and a Level 1 Evacuation order was

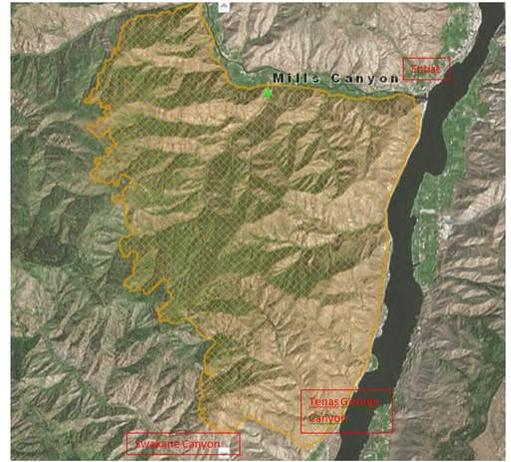


issued for area including the rental house maintained in Swakane Canyon. Wildlife Area staff along with the renters mowed and disked fire lines around the house and set up hand line irrigation around the house. Late in the day on Wednesday Swakane Canyon was raised to a Level 2 Evacuation as the fire pushed south and east and by Thursday exceeded 18,000 acres. Thursday through Saturday a major effort was made to halt the fire north of Swakane Canyon and prevent a repeat of fires that have swept through Swakane Canyon and gone on to threaten homes on the outskirts of

Mills Canyon Fire late Tuesday afternoon viewed from East Wenatchee

Wenatchee on Burch Mountain. The effort, as of Saturday appears to be successful in the lower end of Swakane Canyon but the upper portion of the canyon is still not secure. So far, approximately 900 acres of the Swakane Unit have burned in the Tenas George Canyon area and miles and miles of hand line and dozer line have been constructed in Swakane Canyon during the last couple of days.

The latest fire information can be found at:
<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3937/> and
<http://www.geomac.gov/viewer/viewer.shtml>



Lazuli Bunting on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area



Black-headed Grosbeak on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Photos by Justin Haug.



Bull Moose in Forde Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Photo by Justin Haug.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris toured the Wenas Wildlife Area with District Biologist Bernatowicz and Research Biologist Schroeder to look at habitat quality for sage grouse. RB Schroeder felt that the WLA had good habitat on the north end, particularly in association with the CRP fields.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman talked with TNC Forester Dahlgreen about the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project. The BA was completed this past week and sent to the US Forest Service. They should initiate consultation with the Services soon. In addition, the contract for non-commercial thinning is moving through Novatus and the contractor is scheduled to start work on the 15th.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom spoke with Tina Blewett – DU Coordinator at length about the NAWCA grant, BOR, and future projects on the wildlife area. Manager Bjornstrom has a tentative meeting set up with DU and District Biologist Gregory to discuss wetland projects on the Windmill Ranch Unit.

Wildlife Management

Mourning Doves: Two additional days of dove banding occurred in District 4 this week and 53 additional birds were marked. This brings the total number of birds banded in four days of trapping to 129. Of the total, 34 are adult (“after hatch year”) birds evenly split between male and female. Technician Kaelber assisted with one day of trapping as a training opportunity. He will be running a second trapping station in Franklin County in the coming weeks.



Technician Kaelber inspects the wing of a juvenile mourning dove.

Burrowing Owls: Biologist Gregory and Volunteer Ross visited the burrow where the owl wearing the PTT transmitter has been raising her young. They were hoping to band all six of the young owls that had been observed at the burrow previously. Unfortunately, there was only one owlet in the artificial burrow. There is now a secondary tunnel that has been excavated underneath the existing artificial tunnel. The other owlets may be in that tunnel. A trail camera will be placed on site in the coming weeks to monitor activity at the site.



A second tunnel excavated under an existing artificial burrowing owl tunnel.

Biologist Gregory and Volunteer Mink set up at new camera at the burrowing owl webcam site. Later it was noted that the LED lights are not coming on after dark. Troubleshooting will occur next week.

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to 2 deer radio deer mortalities this week. One was a cougar kill and the second had serious pulmonary edema cause by unknown disease. Samples were collected and will be shipped to WSU.



Radioed Deer Taken by a Cougar



Pulmonary edema in radio collared deer

Quilomene Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz, Biologist Moore, Special Species Manager Harris and Grant Co. PUD Biologist Mark Woodward surveyed Quilomene sheep via the river. Previous aerial surveys had found a much lower number of sheep than expected. Only 62 sheep were seen on the survey and lack of trailing confirmed sheep in the northern portion of the range were currently absent. The population should be >150. Lamb recruitment looks good and no signs of disease were noted. A significant portion of the current herd is living in the State Park and grazing on irrigated lawn at times.



Golden Eagles: Biologist Moore checked the Robinson nest at the request of Research Scientist, Jim Watson. Watson wanted to be sure the fledgling was at the appropriate age for banding prior to coming over. Moore discovered the nest was unsuccessful and all that remained was down.

Robinson nest with down spread across the platform.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore worked with District Biologist Bernatowicz, Special Species Manager Harris and Grant Co. PUD Biologist Mark Woodward to perform a boat survey of the Quilomene Bighorn Sheep Herd. The objectives of the effort were to check lamb numbers and condition as well as the population's distribution across their range. Numerous sheep were

observed at Rocky Coulee Boat Launch and just outside of the town of Vantage. Although, Biologists are concern about the North end of the range, since no animals or trailing was observed during the survey and reports have been coming in about the lack of sheep in the area. Lamb numbers were good and all lambs observed appeared healthy.

Biologist Moore and Manager Harris met with Central Washington University Professor Clay Arango to discuss the progress of the two Interns working on the Umtanum/Selah Butte Project.



Quilomene sheep coming down to water



Quilomene lambs near Vantage

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky continued to coordinate with WDNR on placement of new green dot readerboards along the northern boundary including the Stemilt Basin area. We have readerboards ready to go but this area is complicated due to unresolved land transfers and management.

Assistant manager Hagan finally received the green dot maps printed on aluminum for posting on the new readerboards.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart met with local landowner Donna Campbell and her son Rick, to inquire about the potential for WDFW to purchase their property as a potential site for a shooting range. The Campbells are willing sellers and interested in starting the appraisal process. Winegeart also contacted Kittitas County Under Sheriff Clayton Meyers to discuss the potential for collaborative development of the site. The County is in full support of the project and willing to assist with funding and labor.

Manager Winegeart attended a Mule Deer Foundation meeting. The MDF and the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club have both offered support, labor, and equipment toward development of a potential new shooting range. The MDF chapter is also pursuing a bitterbrush

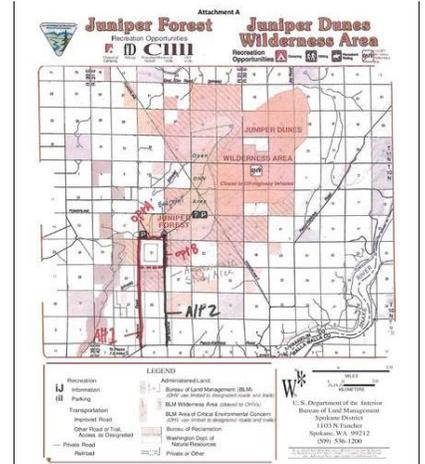
planting project to assist private landowners that were impacted by the Taylor Bridge fire. A burned parcel of mitigation land located on the adjacent wind facility will also been assessed. Planting will begin this fall.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris participated in a conference call with RPM McCorquodale and Olympia Land’s staff to discuss funding for improving safety at two target shooting sites on the Wenas Wildlife Area.

Wildlife Management

Juniper Dunes: A representative from an environmental consulting company contacted Biologist Gregory regarding information on priority species occurrences around an area of proposed road development into the Juniper Dunes OHV and wilderness areas. There are two alternatives for the road placement. Alternative A would follow an existing road while Alternative B would require construction of a new road but would avoid private land.

A diagram of the two proposed alternatives for vehicle access into the Juniper Dunes Area.



Hunt By Reservation Addition: Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner about their access agreement. The landowner is switching to “Hunt By Reservation” for the first time and we identified specifics of the new agreement like number of parties, open dates, and opportunities for hunters with disabilities. Numerous habitat improvement options were also discussed including EQIP, SAFE, and CP33.

Hunting Prospects: Biologist Stutzman met with District Biologist Gregory to discuss the District 4 Hunting Prospects annual write up. Stutzman wrote the Access section of the document, identifying both public and private lands options for hunting access. Stutzman also provided a brief description of each of the four private lands access programs with amount of acreage in each.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: RP Livingston, Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt and Habitat Bio Meyer participated in a tour of the new Gnat Flat acquisition lands with member of the wildlife area WAAC and members of the Public Lands Access Committee that advises the County Commissioners. Other tour participants included new USFS District Ranger Mary Maj, and staff from the Tapash Collaborative. Manager Winegeart and Assistant

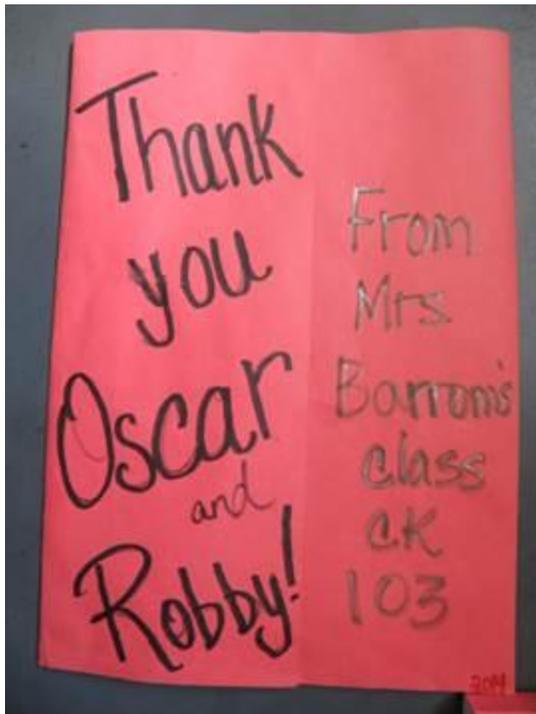


Participants of the Gnat Flat lands tour

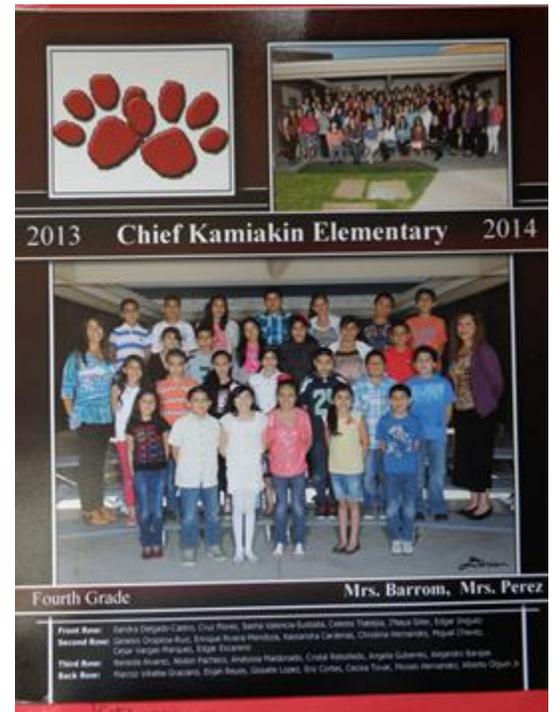
Manager Hunt also met with local grad student William Braun, who is looking for a thesis topic related to social trends and impacts to natural resource management.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman reviewed a SEPA checklist prepared by Yakama Nation staff for the Oak Creek Large Wood Replenishment Project and submitted to Olympia. Huffman contacted Archeologist Kelly about the project and that a Yakama Nation Archeologist would survey the area before the project would begin. By the end of the week the DNS was issued and the comment period opened on the project.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Sunnyside staff received thank you notes from 4th graders at Chief Kamiakin Elementary School who had visited the wildlife area this spring to help plant shrubs and complete nature mapping around two of the wetlands.



One of the many "Thank You" notes that Assistant Manager Sak & NRT2 Medina received



Wildlife Management

District 4 Wildlife Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with landowners and hunt managers on elk locations to pressure them away from valuable crops. He also continued contacting landowners in elk area 3721 to discuss the suspension of the summer bull DPP permits and to coordinate elk hazing strategies. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted one late night/early morning spotlight patrol on Rattlesnake Mountain. Over 100 elk and 25+ deer were hazed from wheat fields. Most were redirected back to Hanford.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to an elk damage complaint at Fewel Farms. A site visit was conducted and although the damage appeared to be minor at the moment, the acoustic deterrent and a LP gas cannon were deployed. Follow-up later in the

Deployed liquid propane gas cannon.

week showed both nonlethal methods were working properly and the elk had not returned.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a deer damage complaint from Conflict Specialist Bridges concerning deer damage at an orchard along the northern boundary of Franklin County. Historically this landowner has worked with both Regions 2 and 3 on damage concerns and we will continue to assist with possible solutions.

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 worked on updates to the Tim's Pond RCO application. There were several edits needed based on comments from the technical review. Huffman coordinated with Cartographer Talmadge and Engineer Hansen to get updates completed for the site maps and development plans. A few more updates need to be completed prior to the 18th when the application is due for final review.

Manager Huffman worked on updates to the Cowiche Watershed WWRP application and coordinate with Real Estate to complete requested changes to the application. Huffman provided additional information on existing grazing on parcels and Olympia staff contacted RCO to address other issues. The application was completed and submitted back into Prism on Friday. Final presentations are set for August 4th.

Assistant Manager Berry transferred the spray tank from the 1998 Chevy to the 2001 Dodge after the Chevy broke down. The Chevy is going to be put up for surplus when the new truck arrives and we were hoping to limp it through the field season, unfortunately it broke down a few weeks early.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff spent three days this week flagging boundaries and riparian zones and marking trees for the hazard tree removal project. Richard Tveten assisted and coordinated work to be done with DNR. We also flagged boundaries of two green tree units in preparation for thinning harvest. Everything should be ready for another review by the IDT team and solicitation of potential bidders.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor field reviewed the areas of elk fence burned through during the Cottonwood #2 fire. Manager Confer Morris then pulled the information into GIS. In the Buffalo road area, the fire burned through 1.7 miles of fence. Of that, two short sections of fence are on the ground, and four sections are compromised. Five of those are short sections that just need posts replaced; the other is a long section of 2000 feet that needs complete replacement of posts and wire. At the Cabin Lane site, fire burned through 0.53 miles of fence, all of which is on the ground and needs complete replacement of posts and wire. Preference of wildlife area staff would be rebuild the 0.9 miles of total replacement (2000 feet in Buffalo and the 0.53 miles (2,785') at Cabin Lane) with the new

steel post fence design. For the remainder of the fence repair, which just needs individual post replacement, we would stick with treated wood posts.



Burned out portion of Buffalo section in need of complete replacement



View of Buffalo section in need of complete replacement



Overview of burn and section of Buffalo area elk fence in need of individual post replacement

Manager Confer Morris submitted an HPA application for replacement of the decking on the Mellotte Bridge. She also updated the 2013 emergency fire restriction signs to reflect language in the 2014 emergency rules. Staff posted the signs at all entrances to the wildlife area.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt and Tech Schnebly met with contract truckers for Matheus Lumber to oversee the loading and transport of fencing materials. Materials had been purchased last year and stored at the Joe Watt compound, and were hauled out to our staging area for the new Whiskey Dick and Skookumchuck stock fence project. Hunt and Schnebly also re-stacked some of the lumber materials by hand and hauled one load to the worksite on the DFW flatbed. Construction is scheduled to start next week.

Hunt assists with off-loading fence materials



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom went over to the Sunnyside HQ Unit to pick up items purchased at the end of the fiscal year. Various tools and equipment were purchased for the wildlife area to replace items lost in the fires. Manager Bjornstrom then went up to the Windmill Ranch Unit to work on the new shop. Assistant Manager Buser posted new Emergency Restrictions signs for wildfire prevention at 11 access sites for Rattlesnake Slope, Windmill Ranch, Mesa Lake, Bailie Youth Ranch, Hope Valley, Clark Pond, Esquatzel Coulee, and WB-10.

Wildlife Management

Planning Certification: Stutzman began working on the Conservation Plan that NRCS requires him to complete in order to become a “Certified Planner.” Stutzman completed the initial documentation and met with NRCS Agronomist Kevin Davis to discuss the planning process and requirements. The plan will be written for a Benton County producer who wants to do some wildlife habitat improvements.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Low Elevation Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued work on the Pika presence surveys in the Stillaguamish Valley. Observations of single animals at each detection site continue.

Stilly Valley Pika Survey

Mountain Goat Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued with preparations for this year’s mountain goat surveys in the north central Cascades. He met with GIS specialist Christopher to work on Mountain Goat GIS layers for use in survey tracking. Flight equipment was returned and procured from Waterfowl Specialist Evenson.

Western Toads on Whidbey Island: Biologist Milner contacted a reporter on Whidbey Island who agreed to publish an article asking for sightings of western toads, especially eggs, tadpoles or migrating toadlets so we can look for breeding sites on the island.

Landowner Concerns about Bird Netting: Biologist Danilson talked to a concerned citizen about bird exclusion netting a local berry grower is using to protect bush berries. This is the second call the district has received about this issue and the concern about impacts to native birds. Biologist DeBruyn gathered additional information about the project and other non-lethal methods that the landowner is also employing and will follow up with both concerned citizens to provide additional follow up.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with staff from the City of Everett to improve the access road to the East Parking area. Ecology blocks were donated by the City and placed along the road to prevent vehicles from driving in the mud along the edge of the road. Additionally, Manager Boehm toured the west portion of the Unit with them to point out areas where additional signage and gates are needed to keep people and animals out of this area. The dike and access road that borders the Unit is off-limits to the public. Plans were made to install additional signage and gates later this month.



Ecology blocks donated by the City of Everett

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with staff from King County Noxious Weeds to tour the Unit. Plans are set for a combined invasive weed treatment targeting listed County weed species including yellow tansy, teasel, and purple nightshade. Next week King County will provide a WCC crew for two days of treatment efforts. Additionally, project partner Sound Salmon Solutions completed the first herbicide treatment along Harris Creek under their new King County grant-funded project.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Several project documents were added to the project webpage, including notes from the first two Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings and the 6 design alternatives that are currently being modeled. Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent an email to the project email list to give project updates and to alert list subscribers to the posting of the documents. The address for the project webpage is: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php. To be added to the email list, please send a request to Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Fir Island Farm Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Brian Williams and Engineer Bob Barnard met to review and discuss the latest draft of the plan. Edits will be made to the document based on the discussion, and the plan will then be sent to the project Independent Technical Review Team.

Fir Island Farm Pre-Project Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw coordinated and authorized a repair of a malfunctioning water quality device with the manufacturer.

Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Project Permitting: The Skagit County Hearing Examiner approved the Special Use permit that is required to build the project. With this approval, the County will review additional County permit applications submitted for the project.

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

Wildlife Management

GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 Nooksack Bull Elk Special Permit Hunt Coordination: Biologist Caldwell coordinated meetings and hunter packet materials for successful permit applicants.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Caldwell entered and updated 2014-2015 Feel Free to Hunt, Hunt by Registration and Hunt by Reservation hunting sites and their access dates/times into the Private Lands Access Website.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys: Biologist Caldwell contacted Refuge Manager Rotton to coordinate survey options in Region 4. Technician Otto began painting survey boxes for hunter surveys.

Migratory Bird Habitat Enhancement Project Proposal: Technician Otto assessed habitat planting operations in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Technician Otto delivered A-19 payment forms to a Whatcom County landowner who successfully completed 2014 planting.

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Springs Surveys: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn conducted annual band-tailed pigeon surveys at two mineral springs in Skagit County. These annual surveys are coordinated with other partnering agencies throughout the Pacific Flyway during a 10 day survey period in July, when pigeons frequently visit mineral springs. Long-term data from these surveys provides an index of overall band-tailed pigeon population status. A third spring in the district, which is located in Whatcom County, will be surveyed later in the survey window.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit (Welts) Access Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw edited a grant application submitted to RCO to improve access features based on comments from the grant technical review team. If successful, this grant opportunity will provide funds to construct a parking area and restroom pad on the property.

Agricultural enhancement program - Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff toured the Island Unit to check agricultural enhancement progress and plan projects for the rest of the summer. Water levels are up with the high river levels from the warm summer temperatures. NRT Cosgrove mowed field areas of canary grass, cattail and other grasses to begin getting them in shape for tilling. Cosgrove also mowed dike tops and removed old barbed wire and t-post fence material to facilitate ditch cleaning later this summer. NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove worked with volunteers with barging operations to take a number of pieces of equipment off the Island Unit and take a tractor and brush-hog over. NRS Meis acquired herbicides for weed control in planting areas.

Agricultural enhancement program - Samish Unit: Sharecrop farmer continues to prepare the site for planting. NRS Meis sprayed thistles/mustard on the site.

Agricultural enhancement program - Leque Island: NRS Meis toured Leque Island, monitored agricultural crops, field prep (lessee's work progress) and weed control. Planting of barley will occur early next week.

Weed Control: NRT Cosgrove performed spot-sprayed limited areas at the Fir Island Farms Reserve Unit as a follow-up to spraying done last week treatment.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Management: Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto performed hunt unit assessments at two Skagit County sites where habitat management was applied. Vegetation height and soil conditions were assessed and noted.

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

Wildlife Management

Survey Box Painting: Technician Otto delivered survey boxes to Whatcom Wildlife are and set up a paint station and proceeded to start painting boxes for the upcoming waterfowl season.

Skagit and Monroe Bear hunt: Technician Otto sent emails to each bear hunter from both hunts with a survey form attached. There was minimal reply so Otto followed up with phone calls to hunters and conducted surveys over the phone. This survey is necessary to help complete the season end hunt report.

Preparation for field spray: Technician Otto inventoried 30 acres of recently planted barley field to look at broadleaf growth and met with the herbicide vendor to figure out the most economical method to combat the unwanted growth.

Master Hunter Coordination: Biologist Danilson continued to interact with the existing master hunt coordinator and a crew of volunteers in an effort to haze elk from a potato field in Skagit County. Several different volunteers are providing hazing coverage during the evening hours, while Technician Cogdal is providing morning coverage. Volunteers (and Cogdal) continue to observe elk in the area on neighboring properties with occasional options to haze them from the field. However, over the past few days, there is evidence that elk have entered the field and topped and trampled some of the potato crop during hours of darkness when volunteers are not present. Danilson met with the volunteer master hunter hunt coordinator for the “Skagit River” hunt and a new volunteer who has agreed to serve as hunt coordinator for the “Region 4 North” hunt. Danilson worked with both individuals late in the week and through the weekend to prepare individual letters/emails that would be sent out to the two pools of hunters. The purpose of this communication is to assist the two hunt coordinators in getting all of the appropriate contact information for each hunter selected to facilitate coordination. Additionally, the letters provide an overview of the hunt, establish expectations, and provide an overview of the issues that have occurred with master hunters over the past several years, so that everything runs smoothly this year.

Elk Exclusion Projects: Biologist Danilson continued to try to advance the three elk exclusion fencing projects that have been funded in Skagit County. Primarily, this has involved multiple

phone calls and emails to one of the project proponents and other department staff to attempt to get approval for some hazard tree removal. These trees are on a boundary line that the private landowner has in common with WDFW. Danilson inquired about the availability of a post driver and discussed options with the landowner for the use of their farm equipment so that the post driving work on this project can get started.

Wildlife Conflict and Wolf Conference Calls: Danilson participated and provided input on a variety of topics –particularly the combined kill permit/damage prevention permit discussed on the Wildlife Conflicts call.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Department of Ecology staff to discuss agricultural, drainage, and wetland enhancement plans that are developing in various stages. Habitat Program Area Biologist Jamie Bails also attended the meeting to provide additional permitting perspectives. Ecology is interested in protecting waters of the state including the wetland and critical habitats that make up the Unit. Manager Boehm reiterated that agriculture is an effective treatment plan while additional Unit challenges such as access, infrastructure, and funding are identified and resolved.

Barley Planting: Technician Otto checked on migratory bird forage plantings on two sites in Whatcom County. These two sites total 60 acres. Both sites are doing well and are about 10 days apart in growth and should produce excellent opportunities for hunters and provide some nutrition for migratory birds this winter.



Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton coordinated with CAMP Construction Project Coordinator Dave Miller about the electrical service for the Wiley pump station. The pump station construction bid is scheduled to go out in the next few weeks. Manager Rotton met with Sean Edwards of Snohomish County Surface Water Management to discuss the Stillaguamish Clean Water District and the Shellfish Protection Program for the area that covers South Skagit and Port Susan Bays. Manager Rotton completed a release of Galerucella beetles on the invasive weed purple loosestrife in the Wiley Slough Restoration area and on a neighboring property.

DeBay Slough: NRS Meis toured unit to look at potential trail development on the site, agricultural field conditions and native planting area.

Leque Island: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis coordinated with share crop farmer regarding the additional barley planting on the site scheduled to occur next week.

Private Lands/Access

Private Timberlands Mapping and Networking: Biologist Caldwell coordinated with a private timber company to share fee access information. Shape files were created to delineate these lands and update existing maps for Region 4. Biologist Caldwell also communicated with another private timberlands manager about contact lists for WDFW staff. Biologist Caldwell provided him with an internet link and a contact list for regional WDFW staff throughout Washington.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Biologist Caldwell contacted private landowners and historic volunteer staff about pheasant release sites at Whidbey Island. Meetings were established to go over land/farming status, access locations and size and to establish goals for the 2014 hunting season. These meetings are set for 7/18/2014.

Private Lands Management: Biologist Caldwell was contacted by two new enrollees for the 2014-2015 waterfowl season. Each participant was concerned about payment structures. Biologist Caldwell delivered a contract to one landowner and is still waiting for another contract to be processed. Biologist Caldwell established meetings with each of these landowners for next week to go over contract obligations and payment structures.

Spring Bear Hunt Management: Technician Otto contacted all North Skagit and Monroe spring bear permit holders regarding hunting success and questionnaire submission. Contacts were made by phone and email to provide hunters the opportunity to submit their hunting results.

Novatus Contract Quality Assurance: Biologist Caldwell drafted and submitted one contract in Novatus. This contract was for pheasant parking at the Bow Hill pheasant release site in Skagit County.

Private Lands Access Program Communication: Biologist Caldwell assisted District Biologist Milner with summarizing new private lands enrollment and prospects for the upcoming 2014-2015 game seasons. Photographs were also provided to Biologist Danilson showcasing success and quality opportunities at hunt sites enrolled with the Private Lands Access Program across Region 4.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey sent inactive instructor letters to 40 hunter education instructors who had not instructed yet this year, advising them that hunter education policy requires them to instruct in at least one class each calendar year in order to maintain their instructor status. Each letter included a personal note designed to encourage the instructor to work at least one class during the balance of 2014. Hunter education coordinator Dazey continues to plan for two pre-service trainings for new hunter education instructor applicants. One of the trainings will be at the end of July or first of

August and will utilize the Nile Shrine center. The other will be in September and will utilize the region 4 office and the the Boy Scout camp Pigott. Volunteer Coordinator Dazey also provided district biologist Ruth Milner contacts in the San Juan Islands for a possible recruitment of volunteers for a sharp tailed snake survey. Volunteer Coordinator Dazey also assisted Biologist Milner in recruiting a master hunter to assist in the removal of a dead fawn from a fence in the Camano Island area. While not necessarily a function of DFW, biologist Milner determined that it would provide good PR to assist the elderly ladies and our volunteers were able to quickly respond. Volunteer Coordinator Dazey continued to plan for the staffing of a Hunter Education awareness and volunteer recruitment booth for the upcoming Mill Creek Festival. The booth will be staffed by hunter education volunteers and will feature handouts and information on volunteer opportunities as well as hunter education in Region 4.

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

Wildlife Management

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Private Lands Access Program Management: Biologist Caldwell coordinated work schedules and priorities with Technician Otto. All tasks were completed and results were clarified at the end of the week.

H-Drive Set up and Information Back up: Biologist Caldwell contacted IT Specialist Moorehead regarding H-Drive syncing and backing up processes. Schedules for a meeting were established to go over these processes.

Supervision and Evaluations: Biologist Milner completed performance expectations, position description updates and evaluations for 2 of the 3 staff she is reviewing. Biologist Milner worked on team building with Private Lands Access staff.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm joined Access staff Derek Hacker and Stephen Sherlock for a day of employment interviews. Five candidates were interviewed to fill a recently vacated position in that Program. Wildlife Area staff worked on Performance Development Plan and position description updates for evaluations to be completed next week.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Peregrine Falcon Management: Biologist Anderson contacted Beacon Rock State Park rangers and indicated that they could open the south side rock climbing area for recreation beginning the weekend of July 12th based on peregrine falcon use of the site. WDFW and State Parks have a long standing management agreement to provide for a seasonal climbing closure during the falcon breeding season. This year the peregrine falcon pair raised two young that fledged in late June.



Beacon Rock State Park

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Does and fawns associated with the Black-tail Research Project continue to be monitored through a combination of remote (satellite) and traditional (VHF) equipment. The peak birthing period of late May / early June has resulted in the capture of numerous fawns. Please see the below-listed details for the Washougal (GMU 568) Study cluster and Coweeman (GMU 550) Study cluster.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project - Coweeman Study Cluster: Six does (out of 7) in the Coweeman cluster have given birth. Nine fawns (out of 12 biologically possible) have been captured from the six Coweeman does. Monitoring of the one remaining pregnant doe continues in the Coweeman study cluster and fawns are being monitored for survival. In the past week two fawn collars have been retrieved after the detection of a mortality signal. One fawn's collar was found on the other side of a drainage over 500 meters away from its last known location.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project - Washougal Study Cluster: Four does (out of 4) in the Washougal cluster have given birth. Seven fawns (out of 8 biologically possible) have been captured from the four Washougal does. Washougal study cluster fawns are being monitored for survival.

Cowlitz River Valley Elk Damage: Region 5 Staff met to discuss options for addressing chronic damage caused by elk in the Cowlitz River Valley. Attracted by the abundance of food, security among homes and farms and gentle topography, elk are abundant near the Cowlitz River. Unfortunately, agricultural producers are impacted by the presence of so many elk. Additionally, the abundance of elk creates a safety issue on Highway 12. Options for addressing the elk situation will be discussed with partnering land and wildlife managers such as the Forest Service and Puyallup Tribe and included in the upcoming 3-year hunting season setting cycle.

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area Invasive Brush Removal: DNR inmate crews from the Larch Mountain Corrections Center have been working the past couple of weeks on the North Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area to remove non-native blackberry thickets and blue indigo bush, in preparation of future restoration activities. The crews were able to cut down over 10 acres of blackberries and they also cut blue indigo bush along a three quarter of a mile section of the



riverbank along Lake River. Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald stump-treated the blue indigo bush with herbicide after it was cut, and Wildlife Area staff will spray the blackberry thickets this fall. All of the areas where the invasive plants were removed from will be replanted with native trees and shrubs in the upcoming years.

DNR crew removing blackberries from along Lake River

Mowing Tree Plantings: Wildlife Area staff have begun work to reduce competition for young trees and shrubs planted earlier this year, as well as from years past, by mowing tall grasses and invasive weeds within tree planting rows. In some areas, the canary grass and common teasel plants grow to over 10 feet and have established densely enough to completely shade out favorable trees and shrubs. By mowing through these dense patches, Wildlife Area staff are able to create open spaces and allow the young trees a better chance to grow.



Before mowing and after mowing photos of tree planting at Hart Lake, planting completed early this spring.



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

Wildlife Conflict

Wildlife Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist McDonald met with Vancouver residents with 5-7 deer in their yard daily. The property is near Vancouver Lake and has a greenbelt on the other side. The greenbelt acts as a wildlife corridor with scat of several wildlife species present. The landowners have prevented deer damage to their vegetable garden with a ScareCrow Motion-Activated Sprinkler, but the deer have browsed down the rest of the property. McDonald made recommendations and gave the landowners a bottle of Plant Skydd to test out. The landowners will also try a Critter Gitter, read through materials provided by WDFW, and take measures to protect their fruit trees from antler rubbing.

Deer Damage: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a Morton Nursery that sells various species of fruit trees. Although their 30 acre nursery is protected with 8-foot electric fence, there is a small herd of deer that are damaging many of their trees. Conklin is working with them to deter the deer. She lent the nursery two Critter Gitters and also a trail camera to set up on a gate to see

if this is the area the deer are accessing the nursery. This nursery is open to the public so during business hours the gate remains open further complicating the issue.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sea Otter Surveys: Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament conducted sea otter surveys on the Outer Coast for July 8-10. Biologist McMillan was assigned the Duk Point count site, working with retired USFWS Biologist Jameson. RPM Cope assisted with the count at Duk Point on July 9th. Biologist Ament was assigned the Sand Point count site to assist USFWS Biologist Lynch.

2014 Count Not Consolidated Yet: The initial ground counts of sea otter are lower than 2013 counts, shown below. The flight counts are conducted by Biologist Jeffries & USFWS Biologist Thomas. The counts will be provided soon in a report for the 2014 count. Biologist McMillan did some exploring north of Duk Point to determine if there was a possible observation point near Father and Son. She photographed the viewpoint to keep in records for options for counts and forage observations.



Viewpoint north of Duk Point.

Biologist Ament participated in the annual sea otter count along the coast July 8 – 10. She was once again stationed at the Sand Point survey site with Deanna Lynch from USFWS. Two staff members from the Point Defiance Zoo also assisted with some counts. Their highest count for the three day effort was a total of 46 otters. The count number range for the first two days of surveys was 21 – 37 otters. The main group included females with pups but a few lone male otters were also observed in the vicinity. One distinctive blonde-headed male otter with yellow tags in each flipper was observed on July 10th mating with a female otter. Lower numbers than usual were counted at the Duk Point and at Norwegian Memorial. The weather for flying was quite good compared to recent years. There was some ground fog and a low ceiling most mornings. The plane was not able to conduct a pre-survey flight on July 7th. The plane was able to conduct afternoon flights on July 8th and July 9th. Finally on July 10th the plane was able to

conduct two full surveys along the coast. Ground counters were present at four of the usual observation locations for the two surveys on July 10th. During the week, ground counters had good visibility and were able to conduct suitable counts. A combination of the ground counts and aerial survey counts (for the three day effort) will hopefully allow for producing a good estimate of the sea otter population along the WA coast. The total sea otter count for the 2013 survey was 1,272 otters. The results from that survey indicate that the growth of the population continues to remain positive, but is slowing. The finite rate of increase for the WA sea otter population since 1989 has been 7.6% each year.



Searching for sea otters from Sand Point



The Sand Point Otter Counting Crew

Table 1. Results of the survey of the Washington sea otter population, 15-19 July 2013.

Location	Independent	Pups	Total
South Segment			
WILLOUGHBY ROCK	3	0	3
DESTRUCTION ISLAND	451	3	454
MIDDLE ROCK DIAMOND ROCK	5	1	6
PERKINS REEF (ROCK 443)	266	2	268
ALEXANDER ISLAND	5	1	6
GIANTS GRAVEYARD	47	3	50
QUILLEUTE NEEDLES	3	0	3
North Segment			
CHILEAN MEMORIAL	1	0	1
CAPE JOHNSON/BLUFF POINT	112	4	116
SANDY ISLAND	2	1	3
JAGGED ISLAND	1	0	1
CEDAR CREEK /NORWEGIAN MEMORIAL	98	8	106
MIDWAY BEACH	2	0	2
YELLOW BANKS	70	15	85
SAND POINT	65	6	71
INSHORE WHITE ROCK SUBMARINE ROCK	2	1	3
WEDDING ROCKS	1	0	1
OZETTE/CAPE ALAVA/BODELTEH	30	6	36
SOUTH OF OZETTE RIVER	2	0	2
DUK POINT	34	6	40
POINT OF ARCHES	5	0	5
SOUTH OF PORTAGE HEAD	1	0	1
BAHOBOHOSH POINT	1	0	1
TATOOSH ISLAND	8	0	8
Totals	1215	57	1272



Common Loon Breeding Surveys: Biologist Ament had been assigned some time on her work matrix to initiate some surveys to determine if there may be common loons nesting within District 16. The previous Endangered Species Biologist for the agency had strongly urged biologists to follow-up on any reported leads within the region. There has been suspicion for years that loons could be nesting at Lake Ozette in Olympic National Park. Biologist Ament has heard loons and seen lone loons at the lake in past years. The agency conducted a multi-bio survey effort at the lake many years ago. Single loons were observed but no loon pairs or young were observed. Since she was in the area last week for the annual otter count, Biologist Ament took the opportunity to do some loon looking. A friend had transported her personal kayak to the lake so she conducted a paddling survey from her kayak on July 11, 2014. She also conducted some surveys from the shoreline during her week at the lake. She heard the vocalization of a loon at 0730 on July 9th. Using a scope she was able to locate a lone loon along the shoreline of the lake, west of Rainier Landing (in the NW portion of the lake). During her kayak survey of the Umbrella Bay area of the lake on July 11th she heard a single loon call but was unable to locate the loon. Biologist Ament did inquire with several people who work and recreate at the lake. She obtained reports from two individuals who feel very confident that they have seen loon families at the lake. The new park maintenance man, Mike Guzman, reported seeing an adult loon with two small young loons near where the Ozette River flows from the lake in early May of this year. A local man who was putting his boat in at Rainier Landing claims he has seen and heard numerous lone loons during his 20 years of fishing at the lake. He also reported that he saw an adult loon with 3 small young loons near Baby Island (south end of lake) in the spring of 2011. Efforts will continue to get further documentation about nesting loons at Lake Ozette.



Searching for Common Loons by kayak at Lake Ozette.



Shoreline areas along Lake Ozette surveyed for loons.



Western Pond Turtle: District 11 staff and volunteers ended monitoring of nesting female turtles this week. This was another successful season with record numbers of total nests and second clutch nests. Thirty-six nests were located and protected with predator exclusion cages. One adult female was depredated mid-season prior to nesting. The highlight of the summer was finding a two-year-old wild juvenile recruit feeding in a shallow pool of duckweed. Wild recruits are very rare at this recovery site, because hatchlings of all known nests are taken into the head-start program at Woodland Park Zoo for their first year.



Wild Juvenile Western Pond Turtle captured at the Pierce County site.