

Wildlife Program

Week of April 25 – May 1, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Annual Operating Instruction Meetings: Biologist Shepherd attended USFS Annual Operating Instruction meetings with individual permit holders in Kettle Falls. Several days of meetings included a wolf discussion and other topics. Biologist Shepherd discussed cost share agreements and data sharing among other wolf related topics.

Southeast Stevens County Ranch Visit: Biologist Shepherd visited with the new owners of a ranch in southeast Stevens County. The owners spotted a large canine near their calving pasture the night before and GPS data indicated a Stranger pack member was in the area. Biologist Shepherd discussed cost share agreements and data sharing among other wolf related topics.

Geographical Information System (GIS) Training: Biologist Shepherd attended a day of GIS training at the WDFW Regional Office in Spokane.

Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Conference Call: Biologist Shepherd participated in the WAG conference call concerning WDFW efforts to develop a lethal protocol. A follow up call occurred with a WAG member.

Range Rider Application Review: Supervisor McCanna reviewed range rider applications and participated on a conference call to discuss applications. Appropriate contracts will be offered in the next couple of weeks.

Monthly Wolf Updates: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett compiled sightings, camera work, and collar information, and reported depredations for producers and interested parties in central Stevens County (Table 1) and WDFW District 2 (Table 2 – Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties).

Table 1: Central Stevens County reported wolf sightings, collared wolf information, camera work, and depredations

How reported	Location	Sightings	Camera Work	Depredations
GPS collar	Stranger collar locations: Predominantly this collared animal has been spending most of the time just south of Kettle Falls and north of Addy-Cedonia Road.		No reports in this area for this period.	No reports in this area for this period.

	Huckleberry collar locations: For the most part, this collar has stayed south of Springdale-Hunters Road down into the Spokane Indian Reservation.		
WDFW Public Sightings webpage		<u>Two reported:</u> 1. 04/01/2016 – Addy, one animal seen 2. 04/01/2016 – Marble Valley, one animal seen	No reports in this area for this period.
WDFW Staff	The Stranger male’s (formerly the Huckleberry male) collar has stopped functioning during this period.		No photos for this period.

Table 2: WDFW District 2 county reports of reported wolf sightings, camera work, and depredations

County	Sightings (webpage and contact)	Camera, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and District	Depredations
Lincoln	No sightings reported to WDFW for this period.	No cameras out during this period.	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.
Spokane	<u>Three reported:</u> 1. 04/06/2016 – Williams Lake, one animal seen 2. 04/19/2016 – Camden, one animal seen, WDFW investigated 3. 04/24/2016 – Deer Park, one animal seen	No cameras out during this period.	<u>Six reported:</u> 1. 03/29/2016 – Cheney, alpaca Non-Depredation determination (no carcass, WSU Necropsy, likely vehicle accident) 2. 04/01/2016 – Newman Lake, donkey. No investigation (buried animal, no call back from owner) 3. 04/11/2016 – Mica, domestic dog. Confirmed Non-Wolf (cougar) 4. 04/12/2016 – Newman Lake, lamb. Confirmed Non-Wolf (coyote)

			5. 04/18/2016 – Mica, domestic dog. No investigation (buried carcass, suspected cougar) 6. 04/28/2016 – Chattaroy, lamb Confirmed Non-Wolf (bobcat)
Whitman	No sightings reported to WDFW for this period.	No cameras out during this period.	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.

Spokane County Monitoring: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to work with a producer in north Spokane County with concerns after a recent canid interaction with his calves. WDFW Enforcement and Bennett spent time in the area this week.

Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Conference Call: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett participated in a conference call with WAG members to discuss nonlethal and lethal options for gray wolves.

Wolf Event Asotin County: Biologist Earl continued daily check-ins with the producer who lost a calf to wolves. There has been no new event. Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade checked trail cameras and fox lights to make sure everything is operating properly.

Samples: Biologist Earl coordinated with Biologist Wik to transfer samples of scat and hair found near the recent wolf events to the University of Idaho for DNA analyses.

Collaring Efforts: Biologist Earl worked a day with the Wildlife Services biologist in Smoothing Iron and Lick Creek trying to locate a suitable site to attempt captures. Wolf tracks were located in both areas.

Wolves Sighted: Two wolves (one black and one grey) were spotted on Smoothing Iron chasing elk. The black wolf had a collar, but there was no data reported on either WDFW or ODFW websites. It was assumed the wolf may have been the Tucannon male, whose collar has quit working.

Montgomery Ridge Sighting: Five wolves were reported crossing Montgomery Ridge Road. Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade met with the reporting party. The reporting party directed them to the area. The reporting party also stated that he was missing three 1-2 week old calves. Earl and Wade spent the day searching the area. They located a livestock watering pond with tracks, scat, and the beginnings of a hole dug under a large brush pile nearby. Cameras were deployed around the pond and the calves have not been located.



Five wolves in a cattle pasture



Crossing Montgomery Ridge Road



Tracks near a private watering pond



Dig near the watering pond



View from private watering pond with wolf and cattle tracks around it

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Wolf Monitoring: A recently retrieved camera deployed by Science Technician Erlenbach earlier this spring in the Loup Loup Pack territory produced photos of one of the pack members. Now that access has improved, we intend to monitor the area more intensely in anticipation of a capture effort

slated for later this season. Biologist Fitkin had no luck obtaining wolf photos from a camera deployed in the upper Methow in the vicinity of multiple wolf reports this winter. However, the

camera has been redeployed further up valley in the area where we received a report of a possible wolf interacting with a domestic dog last week.



Loup Loup wolf pack member – Photo by WDFW remote camera

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Other Wolf Activities: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was called by a livestock producer in the Reecer Creek area who had seen a single wolf a few hundred yards west of his calving operation. He had also recently lost a calf to pneumonia and it had been scavenged by coyotes and ravens. A check of the area found no wolf sign, but monitoring will continue in this area.



No wolf tracks were observed in this field of wild onions

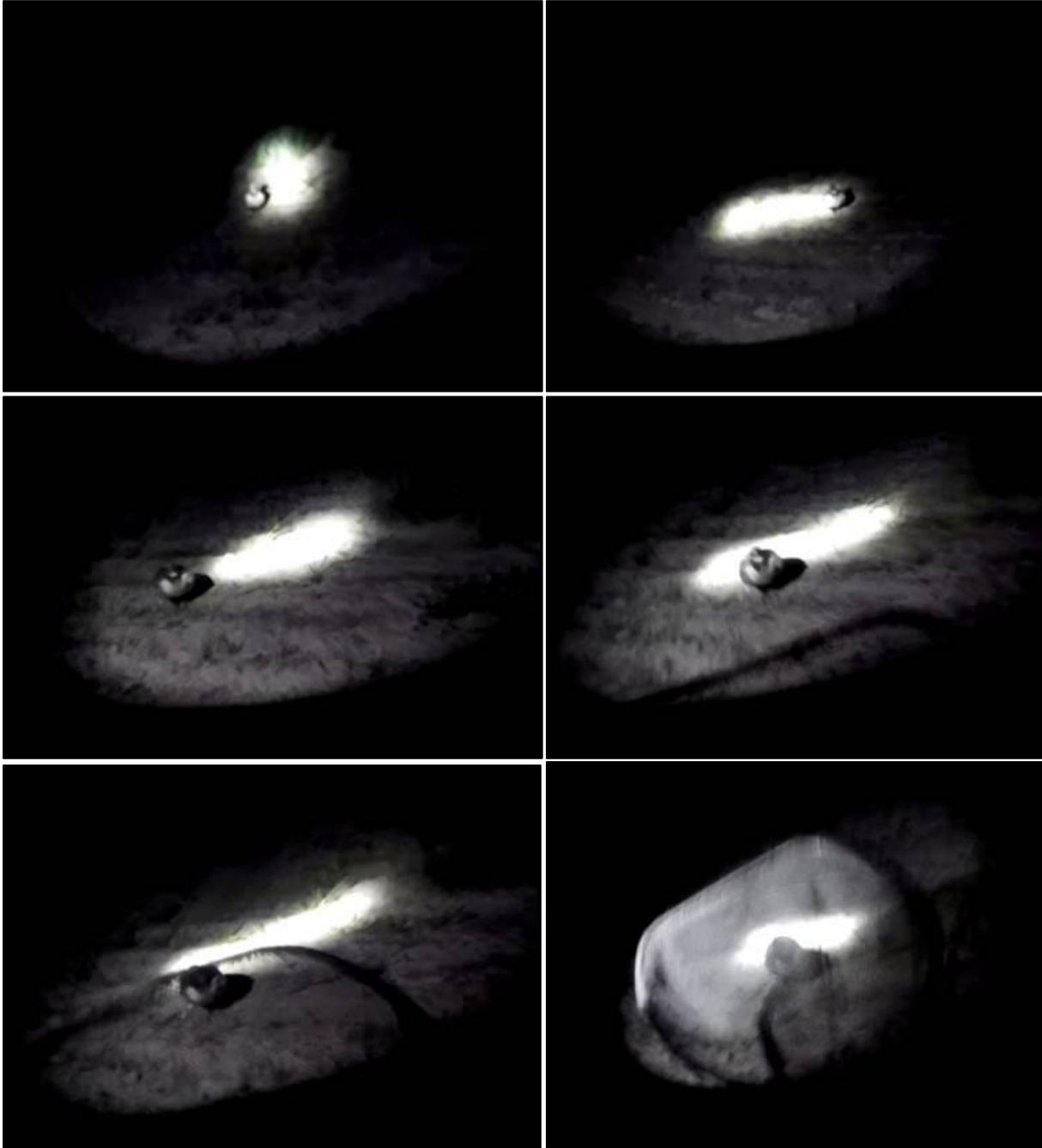
Region 4 Wolf Activities

Wolves: Biologist DeBruyn organized images from this year's camera survey and created/ updated spreadsheets to chronical effort and results. He also communicated with Park Service Rangers regarding an active investigation of activities in the area of the cameras. DeBruyn communicated with Wolf Specialist Becker to discuss recent sightings on DNR property in the Concrete area and a plan of action to assess the situation there.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Douglas County Sage Grouse Project: Biologists Atamian, Lowe, Gallie, Schroeder, and McPherron (USFWS) conducted a capture in an attempt to redeploy five GPS units, two that slipped off from the previous months capture and three that were recovered from mortalities of last year's captures. This late in the season, males were a bit skittish and less inclined to hang out on or near the leks, and we were only able to redeploy three of the units.



Spotlight capture of a male sage grouse



Removal of the male sage grouse captured above



Male sage grouse being equipped with GPS backpack unit

Biocontrol: Natural Resource Technician Wade worked with Biologist Earl to explore the possibility of using bio-controls on the lower Snake River windfarm area to help control yellow star thistle.

Shrub and Tree Planting: The final activity for the recent Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area wetland restoration project along Lake Creek is planting shrubs and trees near the restored wetlands. Private Lands Biologist Todd Baarstad and all members of the northeast Washington Wildlife Area/Access Complex save Jerry Christensen came out to plant on Thursday, April 28. The crew made short work of it and had all 350 potted stems planted by noon. The final delivery and planting of about 400 more stems will occur this coming fall.



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

RGWA Parking Areas: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer met with Inland Empire Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen (IEBCH) members at the Holly Road access site at Rustler's Gulch Wildlife Area. They discussed the site layout and reviewed conceptual drawings on Monday evening this week. The IEBCH, in cooperation with WDFW Northeast Washington

Wildlife Area Complex staff members, plan to apply for a Recreational Trail Project grant from the Recreation and Conservation Office to enhance the primitive parking area at this trailhead access point. Additionally, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer, Natural Resource Technician Christensen, and Access Manager Dan Dziekan were joined by volunteer members of the IEBCH for a Saturday work day at the Beaver Creek (west) access site. Work was done to clear brush and wind thrown tree debris in preparation for opening up a loop drive for increased parking opportunity at the site by connecting an existing road to the current parking area. The project will require minimal ground work for leveling, but a cultural resource survey needs to be completed before that is done. The right photo shows the post work view looking from the existing road toward the current parking area.



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

Feral Swine Concerns in Spokane County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett received a report from USDA about concerns of possible feral swine near Hangman. After a follow up, the three pigs were determined to be pot-bellied pigs and were safely captured. The pigs were remitted to an area farm that could care for the animals until they were claimed by their owner.

Domestic pigs on a Spokane area golf course prior to capture – Photo courtesy of KHQ News

Pheasant Nest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley came across a nesting hen pheasant and was amazed at how many eggs she was sitting on (17). Maybe it is a sign of a good hunting season to come.





17 pheasant eggs next to a \$20 bill

Depredation Investigation: Supervisor McCanna received a phone call from a lady in Stevens County who had one of her goats killed inside a small enclosure. McCanna, Wildlife Assistant Director Pamplin, and Game Division Manager Cope completed a necropsy of the goat to find it had been killed by a cougar. McCanna informed Enforcement, who then contacted a houndsman to deploy hounds at the site of the depredation. The lady will be locking the remaining goats

inside at night. McCanna will follow up with Enforcement this coming week.

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – 13th Annual RMEF Work Party: For the 13th year in a row, volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation gathered at Smoothing Iron Ridge to perform tasks for the wildlife area. A total to 36 volunteers showed up this year from all over the state. Many came from western Washington. This is the longest running Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteer project in the state. The volunteers pulled about 3.5 miles of old interior barbed wire fence, planted 2,000 shrubs, worked on thinning trees in an old agricultural field, and serviced springs and water troughs. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice and Biologist David Woodall worked with the volunteers over the weekend. Conditions were wet and muddy at the beginning of the work party and the weather eventually gave way to sunshine on Saturday afternoon and Sunday. The Saturday evening potluck supper included a roasted pig and many other fine side dishes. The event went well and everyone had a nice time working for wildlife.



Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteers thinning trees



David Woodall working with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteers planting shrubs

*Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
volunteers rolling up old interior fencing*



REGION 2

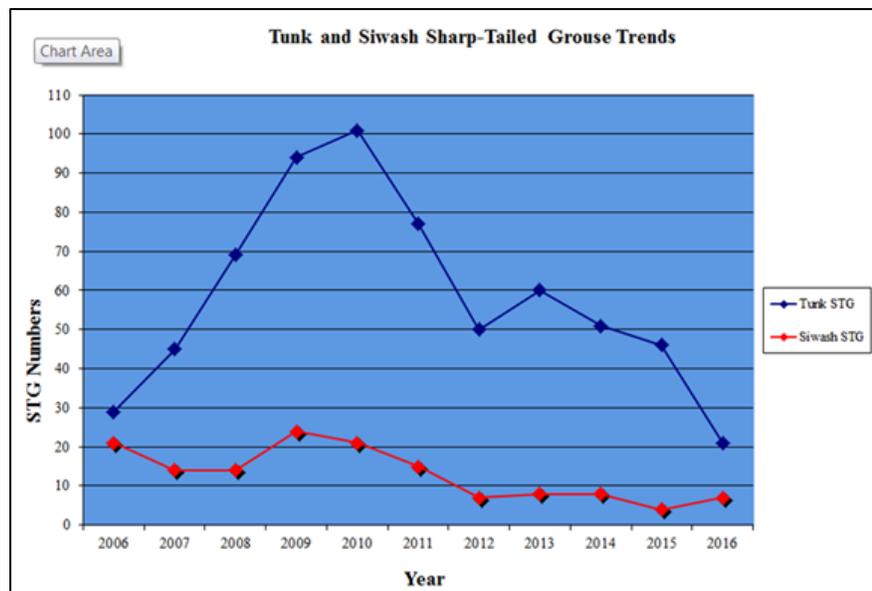
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sharp-tailed Grouse Surveys: Biologist Heinlen finished spring lek surveys for sharp-tailed grouse, focusing efforts in occupied habitat that burned in last year's wildfires. Within the burn perimeter (Tunk Valley), surveys yielded only half the number of birds tallied in the same area the previous spring. In some cases, traditional lek sites were completely empty. Additional efforts to locate birds in adjacent areas proved largely unsuccessful. It's unknown if the reduction in counts is the result of mortality, relocated leks, displacement from the entire area, or a combination of multiple factors. In contrast, outside of the fires (Siwash Creek), survey numbers increased slightly. It's possible that this uptick in numbers represents immigration from burned areas.

Washington Ground Squirrels: District Wildlife Biologist Finger and Biologist Rowan discussed upcoming translocations from a local golf course to a new enclosure on the USFWS Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. Translocated squirrels will

augment an already established small population on the refuge. Finger and Rowan also assisted USFWS staff members with the construction of the enclosure fence and coordinated Correctional Institution and volunteer labor to help with completion.





Two acre enclosure construction at the Milepost 31 site on Columbia National Wildlife Refuge – Photo by R. Finger

Columbia Basin Waterfowl/Aquatic Invertebrate: Biologist McPherson continued with week two of invertebrate sampling. Sites included the Northern Leopard Frog Management area, Winchester Ponds (west of Dodson Road), and TD2 in the Frenchman Hills area. The Northern Leopard Frog Management Area consists of sites that are fish free and sites that have fish. This area also

occurs within the Grant County Mosquito Control District boundary. Based on a cursory look of samples, it appears that fish presence is a greater limiting factor to invertebrate abundance and species richness than pesticide use for mosquito control. This was the first week Biologist McPherson has been going through samples and identifying invertebrates to family. Biologist McPherson has made good progress in the identification of invertebrates, but is still being presented with challenging specimens, particularly invertebrates that are in a transition from one life stage to another. Through the week, District Biologist Finger, Assistant District Biologist Rowan, and Biologist McPherson have been discussing the possibility of adding another site for the project, since we will no longer be sampling Winchester Ditch. District Biologist Finger, Assistant District Biologist Rowan, and Biologist McPherson have agreed that Birder’s Corner will become a new site for invertebrate collection. The reason Birder’s Corner was chosen is because it is fish free and just outside the border of the Grant County Mosquito Control District. In total, biologists plan to conduct monthly sampling of all eight sites and will likely end sampling in July or August.

Nepidae (Water Scorpion) collected from Winchester Ponds – Photo by Chattan McPherson



Pygmy Rabbits: Early in the week, the technicians and Biologist Gibbs cleared several release site tubes in the R and HR sites just north of the enclosure in the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. Technician Shank did the feeding rounds on Tuesday at each enclosure. On Wednesday, Technicians Shank, Quayle, and Erlenbach, along with Biologist Gibbs, set up the funnel walls at LE to prepare for the trap effort on Thursday.

Capture/Release Activities: Biologists Wisniewski and Gibbs, along with Technicians Shank, Erlenbach, and Quayle, trapped at the large enclosure on Thursday with the help of a Wenatchee Tech Center student. They captured and processed a total of 12 rabbits, including four recaptured

adults and eight new individuals. Five new kits were released to the wild, six adults were retained in LE, and a single male with 37.5% Columbia Basin Genetics was brought up to the Dormaier enclosure as a genetic swap. As always, the Tech Center was a huge help and we truly appreciate their continued support.



Technicians Shank, Quayle, and Erlenbach setting up the funnel walls at LE



Rear view of the new rabbit box traps

Ferruginous Hawk: Gallie conducted the second round occupancy surveys on the Douglas County territories. No ferruginous hawks were observed at any of the old nest sites or within suitable nesting structures throughout the territories. Gallie observed nesting golden eagles, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and prairie falcons on the cliffs. Gallie also continued with multispecies sampling efforts for SGA (species of greatest annoyance). Tick populations were evaluated by the number of attached ticks within the two-hour protocol FEHA survey.

McCartney Creek: *Suitable tick habitat (one in two hours)*

Wildlife Areas

Swakane Canyon: Manager Fox, Natural Resource Technicians Vallance and Zabreznik, and the Wenatchee WCC crew completed two riparian plantings with drip irrigation systems totaling 1.8 acres. The plantings are located in old agricultural fields adjacent to Swakane Creek.



Natural Resource Technician Zabreznik (far left) and WCC crew members laying landscape fabric over shrubs planted along Swakane Creek – Photo by Manager Fox



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

Wildlife Management

Pronghorn: Colville Tribal Wildlife staff members notified WDFW that one of their recently translocated pronghorn swam the Columbia River and is currently wandering around northern Douglas County. CCT staff members offered to keep us up to date on its movements.



Wildlife Areas

Supplemental Feed Route:

Assistant Manager Bechtold made a temporary repair on the inlet structure of the North Flood Flat. The added soil initially appeared hydrophobic and prone to erosion, but it quickly absorbed water and now appears to be fairly solid.



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

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fences: CAMP still hasn't hired their replacement fence inspector and Methow Wildlife Area staff members continue to work with contractors that have begun their projects. Manager Furnari met with the Methow SSW contractor and CAMP staff member Scott Allen during the week to address all parties' concerns and questions. They reviewed and walked several areas and met with neighbor Charlie Lehman to review and discuss impracticalities with moving a section of fence to the boundary line because of topographic and ground conditions which will prevent its proper anchoring. She received hardcopies of two fence project maps from Scott Allen. She discussed one location with Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin regarding another neighbor making repairs and installing hotwire fence for his horses. In addition, she answered another question about requiring a gate opening for power company line access next to an AG lease. They managed to get over a mile done this week.



Miles of burned wire rolls to be recycled by a fence contractor – Photo by Sherry Furnari

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife

Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock spent time conducting monitoring visits to SAFE fields. Of particular interest was the rehab of fire breaks created for the Road 6 fire last July. Biologist Comstock also assessed forb areas, which were planted last fall. Biologist Comstock visited a field, which is in the process of being converted to SAFE from wheat/CRP. She mapped out leave areas. Biologist Comstock spoke to two different operators about weed management in their fields and to a seed vendor looking at forb substitutions for a SAFE mix.



Wheat field in the process of being converted to SAFE

Weed Eating Goats: Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with a few farmers starting a new venture in Douglas County. The farmers have started a goat business. Their hopes are to use goats to eat undesirable vegetation. After visiting with farmers and seeing potential benefits,

Private Lands Biologist Braaten suggested some possible other uses that the farmers might check out, including:

1. Roadway vegetation removal (Russian thistle and kochia)
2. Wildfire protection projects along county roadways areas that could protect sensitive habitat
3. Noxious weed removal

Goats were observed eating Dalmation toadflax and knapweed. Currently, the farmer's flash graze the goat herd along sites using portable fencing and dogs. They spend no more than six hours per site. Sites are usually about one acre. According to landowners, the goats will be for rent and will hopefully be used for many things.



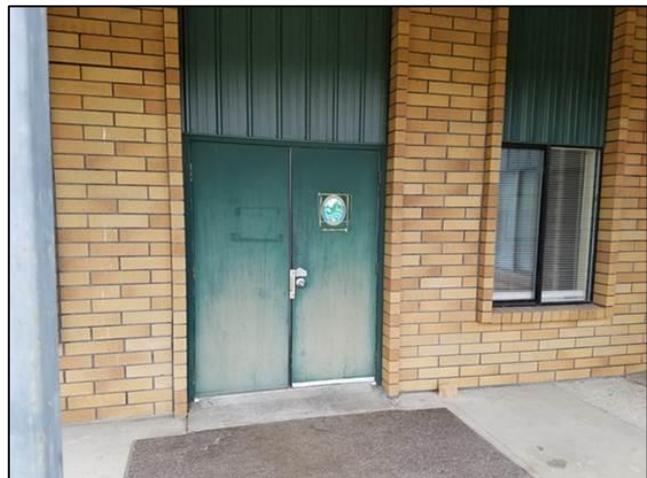
Goats used to control Dalmation Toadflax in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

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

Wildlife Areas

Burn Team Work Center: The Burn Team moved into their new work center at the former USFS Okanogan Office in south Okanogan at 1240 2nd Ave S, Okanogan, WA 98840.

Entrance to burn team work center





Burn team work center warehouse/storage and shop area – to be organized



Burn team work center meeting/training/break room – FMS Leuschen providing training on Rx burning to burn team members Tyler Edwards, John Lassila and Sam Israel. Not in picture – FMS Eberlein and Backup Burn Boss Van Woert.



Burn team work center office for Fire Management Specialist Eberlein



Common garter snake – Photo by Scott Fitkin



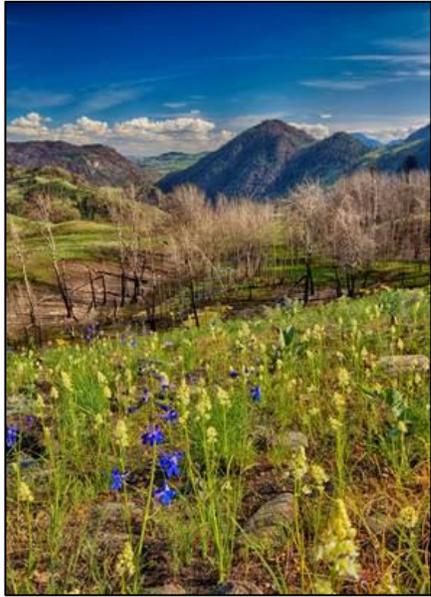
Burton Draw: Adequate tick habitat (two in two hours)



Black widow where I had lunch – creepy



*Campbell Lake & north end of Pipestone Canyon –
Photo by Sherry Furnari*



From top to bottom: Fields of prairie star reacting favorably to last year's wildfire north of Fish Lake, death camas and larkspur emergence following wildfire, and landscape view from above Fish Lake showing post-fire green up – Photos by Justin Haug



Local wildlife on the Bridgeport Unit – Photo by Dan Peterson



Indian Dan Canyon in bloom – Photo by Dan Peterson

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hagan spent a day assisting Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Natural Heritage Program staff members and volunteers in a rare plant survey adjacent to the Colockum Wildlife Area. Whited's milkvetch, a state listed endangered plant species, is found only within a three-square mile area within DNR's Upper Dry Gulch Natural Area Preserve.



Whited's milkvetch, a state listed endangered plant species found on the Upper Dry Gulch Natural Area Preserve



Volunteers laying out plant survey transects at the Upper Dry Gulch Natural Area Preserve

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician 2 Hill picked up all the laydown sections of fence across the Skookumchuck and Whiskey Dick drainages.

Skookumchuck laydown fence now standing up again

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias constructed, painted, and installed a new gate in the elk fence in French's Canyon. The gate was not locked to avoid being damaged, but signs were clearly posted showing the road as closed. If traffic remains light the gate will be locked.



New gate installed in the elk fence in French's Canyon. The old gate and posts were destroyed after being locked. The road is closed to the public.



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber coordinated with the Franklin County Weed Control Board to release *Galerucella*

spp. insects as a biocontrol agent for purple loosestrife control. Insects were released at the Mesa Lake Unit and at the Bailie Youth Ranch.

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra spent most of the week organizing ferruginous hawk occupancy surveys and coordinating volunteers, partners, and staff members. The second occupancy survey of Juniper Dunes was conducted with the Bureau of Land



Management (BLM), Volunteers, and WDFW staff members. One pair of ferruginous hawks was observed soaring, but no nests were located. Occupancy surveys will continue until May 15.

WDFW Biologist Blatz and BLM Biologist Lowe return from hawk survey in Juniper Dunes

Ferruginous Hawk: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman conducted three ferruginous hawk surveys in Yakima County over two days. No individuals were seen during the surveys, but one

of the remnant nests had been repaired since the first survey. Stutzman will return to the location in a couple weeks to survey the nest site again.

Sage Grouse: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman surveyed the radio lek in Yakima County for sage grouse. Only two males were seen displaying, possibly due to the grazing that is currently occurring around the lek.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz spent much of the week preparing a presentation for the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council Conference in early May. The presentation will cover management actions taken during the Yakima Canyon and Tieton disease outbreaks, results, and data collected on pathogens. The draft is now done.

Ferruginous Hawk Survey: Biologist Bernatowicz arranged access to a site on private land and conducted the second occupancy survey. No ferruginous hawks or prey observed. Only one

remnant nest observed. Fires in recent decades have converted the habitat mostly to grassland with low diversity of vegetation.

District 8 Mule Deer Surveys: Biologist Moore ran the R-Sight modeling on deer survey data collected a few weeks ago. The population estimates for PMUs 32, 35, and 36 were 3718 ± 776 , 687 ± 200 , and 1105 ± 295 respectively. Overall, these estimates are approximately ten percent lower than our survey estimates of 2013.

Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis: Biologist Moore is exploring the use of Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI) data to compare relative habitat quality between different bighorn sheep populations in District 8. Moore is looking into relevant variables which could be used to create an appropriate sampling frame to collect NDVI values. After discussions with Range Ecologist Burnham, it was felt that comparable soil classes across each population's home range might be an important factor to consider. An initial investigation performed in R showed soil classes from the Quilomene matched well with the Umtanum, but not with Cleman Mountain or the Tieton ranges. Cleman and Tieton soils matched, but these were only found in the southern portions of the Umtanum and not across the entire range. Additional thought will be needed in creating the sampling frame.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart took down Whiskey Dick winter closure signage Sunday morning. Winegeart encountered 23 motorcycles, three side-by-sides, and one dead elk on the morning of the winter closure opening. Both parking lots on Vantage Highway were overflowing. Weather was warm – cheatgrass has already cured to red on the slopes, and snakes were out sunning.



Public recreation on the Whiskey Dick the morning the winter closure ended



Small gopher snake sunning



Cheatgrass cured on the hillsides

Winter Closure: Assistant Manager Hunt spent some more time throwing rocks off the Robinson View Road prior to the Sunday, May 1 opening of the winter closure. Hunt also opened the back closure gate on the Hutchins Road late Saturday evening and made contact with Officer Peterson. Officer Scherzinger was out at Joe Watt early Sunday morning prior to the 6:00 a.m. opening, and Peterson joined him later. The Enforcement presence is greatly appreciated, as turnout by users was high. Hunt counted 29 vehicles waiting at Robinson Canyon, and stopped counting at 80 at Joe Watt.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor attended the Wenas Target Shooting public meetings in Ellensburg and Selah on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, respectively. Confer Morris gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the issue, and focused on the two current alternatives and multiple options for which the agency wants public input. Taylor assisted with staffing one of the stations, as did Natural Resource Technician 2 Kass for the Selah meeting.

Cleman Mountain: Manager Confer Morris removed closure signs on Cleman Mountain and opened upper gates on Saturday afternoon. Assistant Manager Taylor opened the Mellotte and Hardy gates at 6:0 a.m. Sunday morning. Thirty-six vehicles were lined up, with the first camp (with their tent) set up in front of the gate on Saturday afternoon.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman began organizing for the May 1 opener on Friday, April 29. Cones were set up to direct traffic and to create a horse camp area. In addition, Huffman posted maps for parking and rules when to line up and for a noise ordinance. On Saturday, Huffman continued to answer questions and organize vehicles and camps in the parking lot. Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) volunteers opened the Visitor's Center at about 11:00 a.m. and answered numerous questions and directed traffic. At 5:00 p.m. vehicles were lined up. Thanks to Officers Caton and Myers for being on site to help control traffic and get everyone in line without incident. Myers and Sergeant Grant stayed on site until after 11:00 p.m.

to help enforce the noise ordinance and patrol the area. Eyes in the Wood (EITW) volunteers patrolled the area and prepared for early morning assistance with monitoring the closure. At 4:30 a.m. on May 1, Huffman began assisting with vehicle line up in the parking lot, moving vehicles that had come in overnight to maximize space. Volunteers directed traffic and eventually had to turn about a dozen cars away just before 6:00 a.m. when the parking lot could not hold any more vehicles. Huffman unlocked all the gates at about 5:30 a.m. and had volunteers staged to open them at 6:00 a.m. Huffman headed up Bethel Ridge to watch the circus unfold. On the way up the hill, Huffman observed three people skyline in the closed area who had hiked up from the Junction feed site. Huffman contacted Officer Caton, who was nearby. Caton eventually contacted the individuals, who admitted going in at 4:30 a.m. along with several other people. At 6:00 a.m. the gates were opened and 130 vehicles drove through the gate in the first wave, along with 101 people on foot and nine on horseback. Meanwhile, at Cowiche, Assistant Manager Berry was in the parking lot to open the gate and let people in at 6:00 a.m. There were 29 people on foot and 29 with horses, as well as 15 dogs. The day went smooth, with a lot of people enjoying the wildlife area. Shed were found, but not in high quantities. Thank you to all the volunteers and Enforcement officers for keeping things organized.



Oak Creek parking lot just before 6:00 a.m. on May 1. A record number of people turned out to look for sheds this year.



Cowiche Unit parking lot just after the 6:00 a.m. May 1 opener

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky was asked by Region 2 Director Jim Brown to meet with Mission Ridge Ski Area General Manager Josh Jorgensen and look at a large landslide that occurred at the ski area this week. The three acre slide is largely on WDFW lands, and happened three days after the ski area closed for the season. It damaged an access road and

ended up on the “Mimi” Ski Run. The ski area was immediately closed to public access and was being inspected by DNR landslide geologists this week.



Landslide debris across Mimi Ski Run at Mission Ridge Ski Area, Colockum Wildlife Area



Access road at Mission Ridge Ski Area blocked by landslide, Colockum Wildlife Area

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart began drafting a new Agricultural Lease and a temporary Grazing Permit for an eight acre parcel recently purchased from Spiritwind Farm at the mouth of Taneum Creek. The new lease and permit will be shared with the District Team next week for review.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with volunteers from the Yakima Valley Timberwolves jeep club on Saturday morning for a project to install signs on closed roads in the North Fork Cowiche Area. The group installed seven posts and signs on closed roads.

Wildlife Management

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a deer damage complaint of a new planting of cherry trees at an orchard in northern Franklin County. Fortunately, the damage has been detected early with only minor browsing observed on new leaf shoots. One LP gas cannon, a “scary man” air activated hazing device, along with nighttime hazing patrols, will be implemented to discourage deer activity in the area.



Deer damage to cherry trees in Franklin County

PSE-Wildhorse Reservation Site: The PSE-Wildhorse reservation site went live this week. Private Lands Biologist Stutzman went over the elements of the site with PSE staff members and answered questions that came up.

Ellensburg and Cle Elum Area: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was assisted by L.T. Murray Assistant Manager Hunt and Technicians Leuck and Hill in herding 18 elk from agriculture areas in western Kittitas Valley. Two elk went through one-way gates and the remainder stayed east of the fences. Thanks to the wildlife area staff members for helping move these elk.

Yakima Area: The conflict specialist delivered fencing supplies to a cost share fencing project in the Tampico area. This should complete the needed fence around an orchard that elk had been using this past winter. Thanks to the L.T. Murray staff members for loaning a trailer for transport.

Cost-share fencing materials delivered to a Tampico orchard

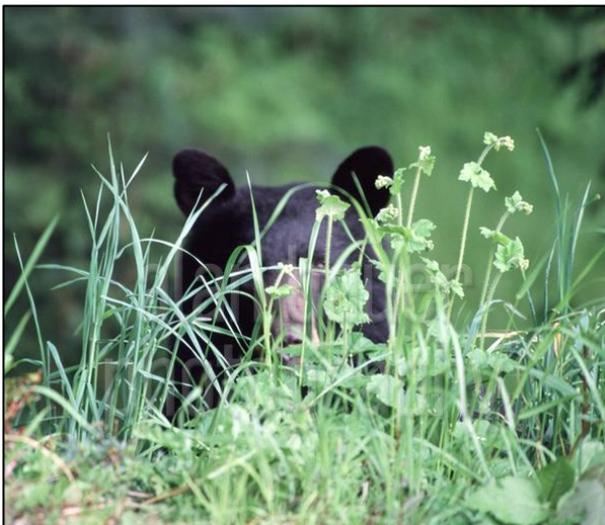


REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

State Sensitive Common Loon: Biologist Smith surveyed District 12 for loon activity. Adult loons were documented (singly and in pairs) on area lakes. However, no nesting activity has been confirmed to date. Continued monitoring will be required to document nesting this season. Biologist DeBruyn cooperated with biologists from Seattle City Light and the National Park



Service to survey lakes in the Skagit Hydro Project for Loons and Peregrines. No loons were observed.

East/West Bear Project: Biologist Smith collected cameras from several bear den locations. These cameras had been placed earlier in the winter to document emergence and cub numbers.

Black Bear – Photo by Alan Bauer
www.alanbauer.com

Wolverines: Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn worked on identifying personnel needs, access, and protocol for checking wolverine camera traps across District 14. This is part of a coordinated multi-state Wolverine Baseline Sampling Project in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Washington.

Shaw Island Reconnaissance: District 13 staff members spent a day on Shaw Island getting organized for upcoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need assessments. Specifically, we will be looking for the Shaw Island vole, but also checking for selected avian species.

San Juan Island Terrestrial Manager’s Meeting: District 13 staff members attended the annual meeting designed to share information among managers to avoid duplicative efforts and discuss collaborative strategies that benefit everyone. After the meeting on the second day, District 13 staff members consulted with San Juan Preservation Trust employees regarding the locations of Oregon vesper sparrows that Trust employees found in 2013. District 13 will conduct surveys for this Species of Greatest Conservation Need species this year.

Peregrine Falcon Nesting/Recreation Management: District 13 staff members completed monitoring the Index Town Wall for falcon nesting activity. A voluntary closure map was transmitted to Forks of the Sky State Park. WDFW, in cooperation with Washington State Parks, which manages the site, and the Washington Climbers Coalition, attempted to determine nesting areas so that a voluntary closure can be instituted to prevent disturbance to the falcons and protect the climbers from the very territorial pair.

Peregrine falcon – Photo by Alan Bauer
www.alanbauer.com



Breeding Waterfowl Aerial Surveys: District 13 staff members flew westside transects for breeding ducks. These low level helicopter transect surveys have replaced the traditional ground-based observations to provide a more robust statistical survey and align better with national surveys.

District 13 staff members surveying a wetland complex for breeding waterfowl



Prohibited Wildlife Management – Invasive Species: District 12 and 13 initiated efforts for invasive species monitoring. Individuals were trapped and sent to Wildlife Health for

pathogen testing. Further efforts and expansion of work will ramp up in May and onward.

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome: District 12 and other WDFW staff members met with multiple agencies in a round-table white-nose syndrome workshop. Topics covered included differences in bat ecology in the Pacific Northwest vs. eastern species, efforts moving forward both short and long-term, partnerships, funding and equipment needs, outreach, networking with the stakeholder community, and many other topics. District 12 coordinated internal and volunteer acoustic surveys throughout the Snoqualmie Valley. Work will continue in this area to provide an index of species activity throughout that watershed. Qualitative monitoring will help drive management consideration and justification of any need for more quantitative and intrusive survey efforts. Acoustic monitoring on a landscape scale provides a proxy for seasonal species presence and patterns. Other passive methods are also being investigated.

District 12 worked with USGS National Wildlife Health Center and USFWS representatives to A) tour the overall landscape of where the known white-nose syndrome positive bat was found, B) examine specific features where bats are known to roost, C) work with USGS to examine methods for passive testing of environmental samples to examine for Pd (fungus causing white-nose syndrome in bats) presence, and D) take USGS staff members on reconnaissance in the valley to go to known roosts and take environmental samples and samples from bats roosting in the same structures – thus collectively exposed to each other if it’s a Pd positive environment. Two bats were sampled at a known roost that generally has less than five bats at any given time. District 12 worked with DNR, the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County, and other land managers to acquire agreements to do this work on their lands. District



12 participated in ongoing internal and external conferencing and correspondence to devise short and long-term efforts and planning in order to manage white-nose syndrome and increase bat knowledge from a management standpoint, research wise, and within the general public.

A Townsend's big-eared bat that was found still relatively torpid and sampled by USGS National Wildlife Health Center with assistance from District 12

– Photo by C. Anderson



Field decontamination of equipment after being in/around known or potential bat roosts – Photo by C. Anderson

WDFW and collaborators are asking the public to report dead or dying/sick bats via our hotline found at the link below. Decontamination, outlined in the below links, is essential to assist in the management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist communities. This includes caving, climbing, and canyoneering.

Report link: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>

More information can be found at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

Protected Wildlife Management – Take Authorization:

District 12 worked with Olympia HQ regarding authorization of take for a Seattle Area transportation project and nesting peregrines. The managing project entity now has a permit in

hand that provides guidance to meet state law. It also provides steps to avoid take or the process to work with WDFW in the event take must occur.

Osprey: District 12 worked with University of Washington, contractors, and USDA Wildlife Services to provide permit and relay laws and guidance regarding osprey nest removal and destruction. District 12 processed at least one or two more requests for destruction as well – neither of which was a health, safety, or property damage situation, so no permits were issued in those cases. District 12 relayed applicants to USFWS for formal or informal consultation as well.

Protected Wildlife Management – Assistance to Habitat Regarding Priority Habitats and Species Non-jurisdictional Management Consultation in District 12: Anderson assisted area habitat biologists when requested to provide for project and local jurisdictional requests for wildlife management consideration centered around the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species Wildlife Management Program. More information can be found on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reported to WDFW Enforcement that someone dumped furniture, trash, and tires on or near the unit parking areas. Manager Boehm contacted Snohomish County's Environmental Protection Unit to haul away nearly one ton of trash, debris, and furniture. Manager Boehm also removed and disposed of the two tire dumps. Enforcement was called on April 28, as Manager Boehm reported a suspicious vehicle with occupants sleeping at the trestle parking area. The occupants were apprehended and the vehicle removed.

Ebey Island Dump

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Werkhoven Dairy to discuss the 2016 planting plan for the Crescent Lake Agricultural Lease.



Habitat Restoration: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that restoration planting projects managed by Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS) are wrapping up for the season. At Cherry Valley, approximately 600 plants were planted across two acres of the Waterwheel Creek Project. At Stillwater, over 150 volunteers and SSS staff members planted over 800 native trees and shrubs and 1,700 lifestakes along Harris Creek. The riparian area along the creek used to be a continuous blackberry hedge. After years of work, it is now native vegetation all the way to WDFW's upstream boundary of the unit.

Restoration planting projects on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area managed by Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS) are wrapping up for the season



Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with a new Eagle Scout candidate to define a trail clearing and native planting project on the unit. Eagle Scout projects over the past two years have greatly improved the ability to walk the trail, view wildlife, and access hunting areas in this unit. This portion of the long-term project is scheduled to be completed by the end of May.

Lake Terrell Unit Agricultural Field Prep: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued working on prepping the agricultural fields at Lake Terrell for this year's barley and fava bean

plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. He has completed two rounds of ground breaking prep work on all the fields on the Lake Terrell Unit. It is planned that 55 acres of barley and 5 acres of fava beans will be planted this year.

Wood Duck Nest Box Materials: Manager Kessler purchased 360 square feet of cedar boards to be used for constructing wood duck nest boxes. Natural Resource Technician Deyo will cut some of the boards into pieces that will make nest box kits for volunteers, master hunters, or scouts to build.



Wood duck

Leque Island Estuary Restoration

Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a Stillaguamish Watershed Council meeting, at which the council voted on writing a letter of support for a grant package that includes Leque Island. Additionally, he discussed funding options for an early construction phase with granting agencies and worked with Ducks Unlimited staff members to engage permitting agencies.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a weekly conference call meeting with PSNERP staff members to discuss the latest developments.

WDFW Restoration Meeting: Wildlife Program, Habitat Program, and Director's Office staff members met to discuss WDFW's role in future restoration projects in Region 4. The group discussed lessons learned from other projects and how to build additional WDFW capacity to support long-term stewardship of restoration sites.

Private Lands/Access Management

Trumpeter Swan Capture: While at the Skagit Wildlife Area, Technician Otto assisted staff members in the capture of a sick or injured swan on the Island Unit. Otto transported the swan to a local rehab center for assessment.

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

Wildlife Management

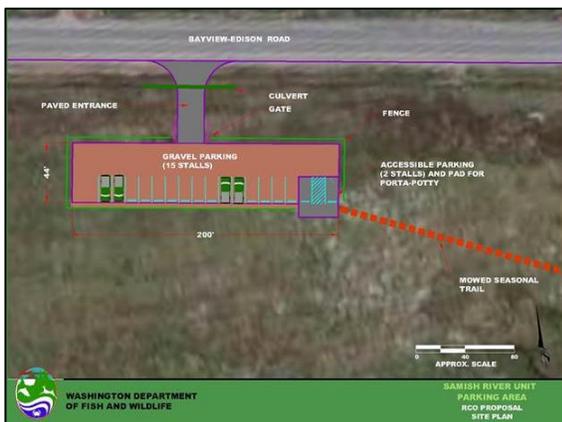
Priority Landscape Initiative: Biologist Yarborough provided edits for the WDFW Priority Landscape Initiative document. The Initiative is intended to identify statewide priorities where WDFW can increase internal and external collaboration across programs.

Citizen Monitoring – Woodland Park Zoo-WDFW Landscape Egg Mass Monitoring and Occurrence Trend Development: District 12 is in conversation with Woodland Park Zoo regarding changing course to keep this effort going, while alleviating real-time case-by-case interactions with increasing numbers of interested volunteers for ID, data entry questions, etc. Woodland Park Zoo and District 12 will be continuing conversations and will likely bring in Wendy Connally, Citizen Science Coordinator, to assist in moving forward with the right options in transition. District 12 provided some identification assistance and other related data entry assistance to volunteers.

Wildlife Areas

Intalco Unit Archery Course: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed the archery course on the Intalco Unit. The 30 target archery range has been very busy with the recent good weather.

Samish River Unit Parking Area: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a grant application to construct a parking area at the Samish River Unit. The Samish River Unit is popular among bird watchers, waterfowl hunters, and fishermen, and the site is attracting increasing numbers of waterbirds since a wetland restoration project was installed last summer. There is currently no parking lot on the site, and if funded, the new parking area would accommodate 15 cars, two ADA spots, and a portable toilet.



Above is the plan for a new parking area at the Samish River Unit that was submitted in a grant request



The above map shows the locations of the proposed parking area in relationship to other features on the site

Vashon Island Radio Interview: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell, Assistant District Biologist Smith, United States Geological Survey Associate Regional Director Frank Shipley, and Director of the Vashon Nature Center Bianca Perla attended the KVSH/Voice of Vashon Island radio show to discuss Columbian black-tailed deer on Vashon Island. Information and ideas were shared and discussed on deer biology, ecology, and management of deer on the island. Specific information was presented on general and special permit hunting seasons and the Private Land Access Program as a means of managing population levels on Vashon Island. Additional information was presented on methods to prevent human/deer conflicts. Special consideration was placed on providing listeners with critical perspectives surrounding human/deer interactions, deer welfare, and conserving the aesthetic qualities of wild deer.

Spring Bear Hunt: Biologist Wingard toured the North Skagit and Monroe units of the spring bear hunt to check for new damage to timber and signs of bears and bear hunters. While in the unit, Biologist Wingard contacted hunters and spotted a good looking bear. Natural Resource Technician Otto completed gate checks on the Monroe Spring Bear unit. Natural Resource Technician Otto found one gate that was dummy locked and secured the gate. Otto found multiple freshly peeled trees on the west side of the unit.

Wildlife Viewing: Biologist Wingard completed wildlife viewing and diversity contracts. These sites provide opportunities for the public to view wildlife on private lands.

Migratory Bird Forage: Biologist Wingard scheduled a meeting with a local farmer who will be planting a large amount of barley for waterfowl forage in the coming weeks. At the meeting, Biologist Wingard and the farmer will discuss the planting schedule and finalize the contract. Natural Resource Technician Otto started herbicide application on migratory bird forage sites in Whatcom County in preparation for barley planting. Otto soon found out that many of the locations have not yet drained from the recent wet spring. Otto and staff members from Whatcom Wildlife Area were able to get the gator free from the clinches of mud and canary grass terrain. Otto also met with staff members from the Skagit Wildlife Area to discuss scheduling of the shared tractor and various farming implements for the upcoming planting season.

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

Wildlife Management

Human/Wildlife Conflict Management: Biologist Smith conferred with landowners in the Black Diamond area experiencing elk damage to fruit trees. Fencing design and hazing techniques were discussed. Smith also met with landowners complaining of aggressive deer near Issaquah. Hazing alternatives were discussed. Biologist Smith provided several parties with information on deterring and lethal control of birds damaging structures. These types of calls are common during and following flicker nest site selection. More information can be found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html>

Deer Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a complaint in the Ferndale area of Whatcom County about a deer browsing on raspberry plants on the properties of two separate producers. Upon surveying the damage, Witman found significant browsing activity on three rows of raspberries bordering a tree line. The landowner was encouraged to chase deer from the property and was issued a depredation permit to be used as a last resort.

Elk Fence: Natural Resource Technician Cogdal and a Skagit Valley College Environmental Conservation internship student continued to make progress on current elk exclusionary fence projects in Skagit County.

Deer browsing activity on raspberry vines as new spring growth arrives

Whatcom Wildlife Advisory Committee: Biologist Yarborough attended the committee meeting. The committee is currently working on revising chapters in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan related to wildlife.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with a Drainage District 7 Commissioner to discuss ditch maintenance within the Cherry Valley Unit. Debris and vegetation is clogging many portions of the ditches, severely impacting the unit's ability to drain.



Agricultural Lease Plans: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss planting plans for the 2016 growing season for agricultural leases at the Cherry Valley and Stillwater units. Manager Boehm also reports that the Crescent Lake lease with the Sky Valley Tractor Club has been sent to Olympia for the final signature.

DeBay's Slough: Manager Rotton received the approved amendment to the DeBay Slough lease and will request the signature from the sharecrop farmer.

Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton attended the Fir Island Farm weekly construction meeting. Rotton followed up with the farmer leasing the property to discuss the plan for installation of the agriculture field crossing over the No Name Slough ditch.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove continued field preparations on the Island Unit for agricultural and moist-soil enhancements. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers to assist with dike and road mowing on the Island Unit, and enlisted and coordinated volunteer help

for ferrying operations next week. Cosgrove planted about five acres of sunflowers on the Island Unit. Sunflower seed was donated by Ducks Unlimited and will be grown as a trial to see what use there might be by doves and waterfowl.

Samish Unit: Meis continued to spray noxious weeds at the Samish Unit along ditches and pond edges.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove prepared the grain drill for fava bean planting scheduled to take place next week on the Island Unit. Meis toured the Island Unit, monitoring progress of disking and culti-packing, and assisted Cosgrove with planting sunflowers totaling approximately five acres. Meis coordinated equipment and supplies for the corn and fava bean plantings on the Island Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunt: Biologist Wingard answered many questions and provided guidance to several spring bear permittees. Biologist Wingard spoke with a successful bear hunter who harvested a bear that had tree bark in its stomach and esophagus. Biologist Wingard completed private timberland access contracts.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Breakdown: A partner landowner called and asked private lands staff members if there was waterfowl hunt unit material still in the field, as the farmer would be plowing shortly. Until the recent spell of warm weather, the site had too much water to retrieve our equipment. Biologist Wingard was able to remove the remaining equipment and the landowner and farmer were appreciative of the timely response. Natural Resources Technician Otto sorted, secured, and labeled waterfowl blinds and signage for the offseason.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey assisted a hunter education instructor to cancel and reschedule a class. Only three students had signed up and the instructor contacted them and rescheduled the students into another class. Coordinator Dazey evaluated the team that teaches at the Renton Fish and Game Club. The class was well attended by both students and instructors. They all did an excellent job. While at the class, Dazey made a presentation for instructor Andrew Dean, who has been an instructor for 20 years.

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

Work Planning: District 14 staff members worked with Olympia staff members to discuss work plans related to Oregon spotted frogs, wolverines, and other projects.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Biologists Butler, Stephens, and Holman teamed to follow-up on a mortality among one of the study black-tailed does in the Coweeman cluster. Biologist Butler investigated the deer's mortality location after being notified by satellite monitoring. The deer was partially consumed and cached by a cougar. A trail camera was placed on the kill location. A return visit by Biologists Stephens and Holman confirmed that a cougar predated the deer, which was completely consumed upon the return visit. Please see photos below of the cougar returning to the location of its kill.



Ferruginous Hawk: Biologists Anderson, Bergh, Meyer, and volunteer Flick finished the second round of ferruginous hawk occupancy surveys this week. This effort is being conducted throughout eastern Washington to update the current population estimate for this state threatened species. Although no ferruginous hawk pairs were located in Klickitat County, a few red-tail hawks were seen. Three Swainson's hawks and two prairie falcon territories were located.



Eastern Klickitat County raptor habitat



Assistant District Biologist Bergh looking for ferruginous hawks



Assistant District Biologist Bergh looking for ferruginous hawks

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Biologists Butler and Bergh set and monitored eight turtle traps in a pond off Bergen Road this week. Turtle trapping had never occurred within this pond before, but western pond turtles had been previously marked and released at nearby ponds. One previously marked adult male western pond turtle was captured during the week long effort. Unfortunately, due to additional growth and wear on the turtle's shell, the markings were indecipherable. In addition to the western pond turtle, four painted turtles and one bull frog were captured.



Western pond turtle



Painted turtle

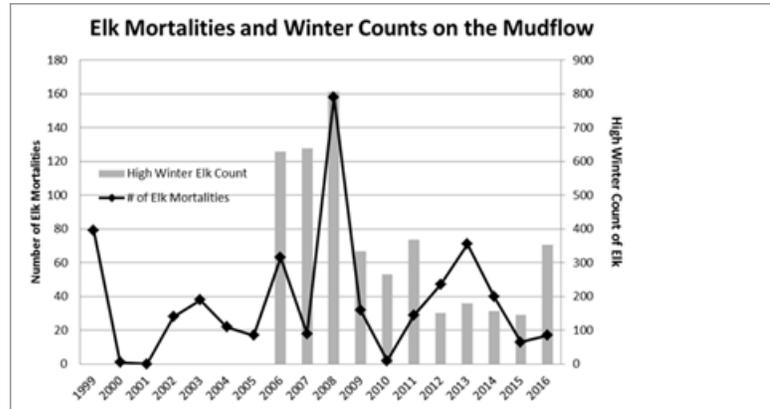
Western Pond Turtles: Biologist Bergh joined Dr. Tim Storms of the Oregon Zoo to visit the nine turtles being taken care of at Larch Corrections Center. Two inmate technicians are caring for the turtles while they recover from treatments for Undefined Shell Disease. Dr. Storms administered the treatments last fall and was satisfied by the progress the turtles made in healing. He recommended that all of the turtles be released back into their ponds next month. The success of these treatments will be evaluated in future years as the turtles are recaptured in their ponds.

Mudflow Elk Mortality Survey: WDFW Region 5 Wildlife staff members Hauswald, Hand, Sample, Holman, and Stephens, along with volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, completed the elk mortality survey on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. This survey has been conducted annually on a portion of the wildlife area and serves as an index of winter severity. Generally, as more snow accumulates in higher elevations, more elk congregate on the Mudflow seeking food. This year's mortalities totaled 17 with a high

count on the Mudflow of 358 on December 31. This is a bit of an anomaly in that it is a relatively high count of elk using the wildlife area while it is a fairly low number of mortalities. This could be due to the fact that the snow present in the surrounding hills at the end of December did not last long. We would like to extend a huge thank you to members of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation who participated in this survey.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Pasture Restoration: Last week, Assistant Manager Hand began the spring 2016 pasture restorations efforts on Shillapoo and Vancouver Lake Wildlife Units. Three sites are included in this year’s rotation, which total almost 30 acres. The



two sites at Shillapoo include the North Lake River field in the North Unit and the North McBride field in the South Unit. At the Vancouver Lake Unit, this year’s restoration site is the northern half of the pasture south of the sporting clay area. These areas were chosen because of their high preferential appeal to wintering geese and a decline in desired grass species with an overabundance of noxious weeds, blackberries, and reed canary grass. The treatment schedule for these sites was an herbicide application for blackberries in the fall with a non-selective herbicide application in the spring a few weeks before disking began. During the winter,

Assistant Manager Hand collected soil samples from these sites, which helped determine the correct fertilizer/lime application needed. The fertilizing schedule for these pastures includes a pre-planting application of lime, post-planting application of fertilizer, and a fall application of lime.



North McBride pasture restoration site

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fence Reconstruction: Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis began a fence repair project along Hill Road on the Goldendale Hatchery Unit. This segment of fence line is badly deteriorated and does not keep cattle from straying off the road into the wheat fields on the WDFW property when they are being driven to summer pasture in the Simcoe Mountains. Work started with tearing down old posts and bracing at the intersection of Hill Road and Fish Hatchery Road. Ten new fence posts were set in the ground at this location, which is the north end of the segment of fence to be fixed this year.



Old Fence at Hatchery Road Intersection



Posts for New Fence at Hatchery Road Intersection

Rare Plant Survey: Volunteers Stanek, Arnold, and Allen conducted a survey for Barrett's penstemon on the Sondino Unit this week. Part of the unit contains suitable habitat for this species. However, it has not been formally surveyed for presence of this plant. A report on the results of the survey will be sent to the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

Rare care volunteers

Grazing Permits: Manager Van Leuven visited two grazing permit areas on the Fisher Hill Unit to monitor range utilization. Both sites showed very little use as of 13 days after the cattle turnout date, and no animals were observed at either property.

Fisher Hill

Road Maintenance: Technician Davis worked to remove debris from a clogged culvert on the Soda Springs Unit. Extensive effort using a tree for a plunger and a fire hose has opened up a small hole in the mass of leaves and silt, allowing some water to pass through. More work will be required to fully clear the obstruction from the pipe next week.



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

Private Lands

Register to Hunt: Biologists Meyer and Stephens installed two new kiosks at a Register to Hunt property in Wahkiakum County.



Two new Register to Hunt kiosks after their installation in Wahkiakum County

Access

Spring Cleanup: Access staff members sprayed herbicide and a soil sterilizer mix to spray around the restrooms, parking lots, and reader boards at five sites, including Langsdorf Landing, Shillapoo, Martin, Rowland Lake, and Icehouse access areas. In addition, with increased spring activity, there has been an increase in cleaning up and disposing of large amounts of trash at many access sites.

Spraying at Shillapoo



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

Wildlife Management

Watchable Wildlife / Wildwatch Cameras: Wildlife Citizen Science Coordinator Connally and Biologist Holman teamed to facilitate the placement of a new osprey cam on the WDFW website. The camera and link are generously provided by the Cowlitz Public Utility District. The link provides real-time viewing of an osprey pair utilizing a nesting platform installed by the PUD 15 years ago. Thanks to Cowlitz PUD for their provision of this nesting opportunity for the birds and for sharing their link with WDFW. Please visit the new osprey camera at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/ospreycam/>

RCO Grants: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and Biologists Hauswald and Van Leuven submitted four Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grants through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in the Critical and Riparian categories for proposed acquisition projects in Cowlitz and Klickitat County.

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin verified bear damage on industrial timberland in Lewis County. In addition, Conklin responded to complaints regarding a bear getting into garbage cans. Advice was given to bring in garbage, bird feeders, and outdoor grills.



Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a landowner in the Boistfort Valley to verify elk damage on his fields. This farmer grows several crops for the seed market.

Japanese kale grown for the seed market

District 9 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialists Peterson and Conklin responded to bear damage on commercial timberland in Clark County. The timber company reported fresh damage to a tree and requested a depredation permit to lethally remove a bear from the area. Peterson and Conklin were able to locate and identify the damaged tree. A permit has been issued.

Elk and Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Peterson met with the manager of a Husum area orchard to discuss new fencing methods. The orchard has recently expanded their operation and has added new cherry, apple, and pear saplings. In past years, the orchard has worked with WDFW to mitigate elk and deer damage. Peterson will assist the orchard in constructing an electric fence for the initial planting phase and will work with the orchard to protect the new trees throughout the year.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Harbor Seal Tagging: As part of a study on harbor seal diets in south Puget Sound, Biologist Murphie assisted the WDFW Marine Mammal Investigations Unit staff members in the capture and tagging of one adult male and one adult female last week. These seals were caught by a beach rush capture technique. Both instruments were deployed at Colvos Rocks near Port Ludlow.

Breeding Waterfowl Survey: Biologist Murphie assisted Waterfowl Specialist Evenson in his efforts to survey for breeding waterfowl at freshwater habitats in south Puget Sound. Survey transects are distributed across the state and will be completed during the next two weeks.

Biologist Michaelis assisted Sea Duck and Waterfowl Survey Specialist Evenson on a breeding duck survey within the majority of the Chehalis River drainage. Transects were flown and the number of paired, single drakes and groups of ducks were recorded. Flights are used as a long-term index to estimate the contribution of Washington breeding ducks to population productivity.

Checkerspot Butterfly Search: Biologist Murphie conducted a search for Taylor's checkerspot butterflies along areas of potential habitat on the east slope of the Olympics. No checkerspots were found.

Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom helped Technician Raby one day this week at Leadbetter. Sundstrom found three new nests for Raby to monitor. A field crew from USFWS visited Leadbetter with an objective to gather data on plover behaviors during razor clam digging. Sundstrom also did a survey of the Oyhut Spit/Damon Point area for plovers.

Only one new nest was discovered at Midway and nearly a dozen new scrapes were found.

2016 Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
13	12	0	1	0

Technician Raby conducted nest searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter. Raby also assisted Washington State Department of Ecology Environmental Specialist McCandless with access into restricted areas for a dune morphology study, while WDFW Biologist Sundstrom assisted the USFWS Migratory Bird Group with an observational pilot study of snowy plovers at the tip of Leadbetter.

2016 Leadbetter Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
13	13	0	0	0

Biologist Novack met with Headquarters staff members to discuss the current budget and future needs for the plover monitoring and recovery efforts. He reviewed the overall budget and summarized it for HQ to assist with development of the next Section 6 grant proposal.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Reintroduction: Counts at Range 76 (source site) continue to be low relative to other years and relative to several other sites. Estimated counts by Biologists Linders, Randolph, and Radford working together with two JBLM biologists were 145 adults on April 18, 267 on April 20, 151 on April 25, and 138 on April 30, with 16 lines surveyed. The EOD area was excluded from all but the last survey. In contrast, surveys of 16 lines at R50 on the same dates returned estimated counts of 989, 1092, 340 (12 of 16 lines), and 476, respectively. Scatter Creek has also performed well, with estimated counts of 236 on April 19, 473 on April 21, and 300 on April 28. Sixteen lines were surveyed. Surveys at Glacial on the first two dates returned estimated counts of 49 and 85 adults, respectively, with 49 adults counted on April 26. Surveys at the TA7S reintroduction site revealed two adults on April 18, with no adults observed during surveys on April 20 or April 26. All surveys were conducted under protocol conditions.

Several surveys at R76 and R50 were conducted under check-fire conditions, which was fortuitous. Missing these counts would have precluded peak flight season counts, and collection for captive rearing, with similarly challenging implications for JBLM. A total of 41 females have been collected to date, with 20 sent to the Oregon Zoo in Portland, 10 to the Mission Creek rearing facility, and the remainder to the University of Washington in Seattle. In addition to the captive rearing effort, eggs are being collected for research on the relative suitability of three oviposition host species, including long-leaved plantain, harsh paintbrush, and golden paintbrush.



Biologists Randolph, Radford and Cook surveying a reintroduction site where recent seeding of blue-eyed mary, a native annual used as a larval host by Taylor’s checkerspot, is flowering



Biologists Radford and Randolph surveying source site, where blooming balsamroot and spring gold provide nectar for adult butterflies

Taylor’s Checkerspot Rearing: The Oregon Zoo reports that its first pupae was found on March 30, with its first adult butterfly eclosing on April 9. As of April 22, seven pupae had not yet eclosed as adults. A total of 79 larvae opted to return to diapause. They have also conducted 36 breeding introductions, 17 of which were successful, and only one dyad is left to breed. Forty-eight females are currently in oviposition chambers and over 6,415 eggs have been obtained.

Mission Creek had 109 adults, 307 pupae, and 48 second diapause larvae as of April 20. They had a total of five larval death and three pupae deaths. Breeding of all dyads in the first daisy chain is complete. After the first three days of breeding (starting April 18), they had nine successful copulations from five separate dyads. They currently have 20 females in oviposition chambers and have obtained 1,006 eggs. Mortality of 11 females and low egg productivity is unusual, and we are exploring potential causes, including the use of raw honey.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys at Southern Extant Site West of the Elwha:

Biologist McMillan conducted Taylor’s checkerspot surveys and worked at developing a route with some transects from the Ridge Top route down to the Eastern Lower route. On both Taylor’s checkerspot survey days the weather deteriorated and complete surveys were not accomplished. The effort to survey on Tuesday, April 26, was not started due to cloud cover. The weather was warm, so Biologist McMillan worked on the development of a new route. At the bottom of this new route there were checkerspots observed flying. This is a new documented area of occurrence by Taylor’s checkerspots at this site.



Calypso orchids in forested portion of route



Site of new documented occurrence of Taylor’s checkerspots on the known periphery of the southern extant site, towards the southeastern end of known occurrence

On Thursday, April 28, the weather started off good as Biologist McMillan conducted the West End route, but halfway through the cloud cover came in and didn't clear enough to continue the survey. The count up until the weather changed was 100 Taylor's checkerspots. McMillan has been conducting follow up, completing data forms for 2016 and getting the GIS maps generated for the survey efforts to be included on the data forms.

Fisher: Biologist Michaelis searched four hexes and selected three stations within each hex for the purpose of camera monitoring. This is the fourth year WDFW has assisted Olympic National Park in order to determine fisher distribution on the peninsula post release. So far, Michaelis has detected no fishers and these results are consistent in areas outside of Olympic National Park.

White Nosed Syndrome: Biologist Novack transported a dead bat to the lab in the Natural Resource Building for white-nose syndrome sampling

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

Wildlife Management

Black Bear: Biologist Novack checked one bear from the Long Beach spring hunt and responded to various customer service calls, including a purported wolf seen in Hoquiam.

Novack also communicated with researchers leading a study of black bears in Washington and Oregon. The objective of the study is to better understand the behavior of bears that cause damage to young timber stands in the spring. Further communications occurred with HQ and regional staff members to assess WDFW involvement.

Wildlife Areas

Community Outreach and Education: Manager Belson coordinated with local Eagle Scout Kelin Pasko to install three new kiosks at the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. Mr. Pasko and 20+ of his friends and neighbors arrived early on Saturday morning ready to transport, assemble, and erect the DNR-style kiosks at each of the wildlife area public parking areas. The old kiosks had already been removed and salvaged by wildlife area staff members for reassembly elsewhere on more remote wildlife area units.

This project was made possible by the WDFW Watchable Wildlife Program, which supplied the kiosks, and by Richard Tveten (Lands), who facilitated initial contact with Mr. Pasko.

Eagle Scout Kelin Pasko (holding shovel) and crew

