

Wildlife Program

Week of July 11 – July 17, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

WSU Research Project Presentations: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, and Biologist Earl attended presentations for four different research projects looking at wolf conflict in Washington.

Profanity Peak Pack Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialists Bennett and Shepherd, Biologist Earl, and other members of the WDFW Wolf Team participated in a conference call about recent depredations in the Profanity Peak wolf pack.

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on multiple conference calls this week regarding current wolf activity to range riders.

Profanity Pack: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman investigated a confirmed wolf kill, placed a remote camera, monitored multiple allotments, and also worked with range riders in multiple allotments. Wolf activity and other issues were discussed with the ranchers. Biologist Shepherd communicated with Olympia and Wolf Advisory Group members concerning the issue.

Sherman Pack: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Officer Parkert responded to a complaint of a dead cow in the Sherman Pack area. The issue was resolved by tracking the origin of the complaint. It was an interpretation of a news story concerning the Profanity Peak pack.

Dirty Shirt Pack: Biologist Shepherd spent time in the Dirty Shirt pack home range assessing wolf activity near ranches and cattle.

Wolf Trapping Training: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Wolf Biologist Roussin checked traps in northeast Washington. There was no new wolf activity in the area.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA_L): Biologist Earl worked with producers to line out deterrent measures for DPCA_L agreements. Natural Resource Technician Wade met with Asotin and Garfield county producers to have new DPCA-L agreements signed. Wade continued to enter DPCA_Ls into the Novatus contracts system.

Wolf Activities: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley and Natural Resource Technician Wade met with Garfield and Asotin county producers and local loggers to discuss the recent wolf activities in the Blue Mountains. Biologist Earl received several calls and messages about wolf activities in the Blue Mountains. Earl forwarded all of the information to WDFW staff members responsible for collaring and monitoring efforts.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker worked with a cattle company within the Loup Loup territory to get access to wolf collar locations. Specialist Heilhecker touched base with the contract range rider working in the Beaver Creek territory.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Monarch Butterfly Survey Training: Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince attended a monarch workshop this week. The indoor session included an overview on the status of monarchs, identification, habitat use, and migration patterns. The outdoor session included survey protocol review and practice searching for monarchs. Very little is known about Washington's monarch population, and hopefully this survey will collect valuable information to expand our knowledge of the distribution of monarchs in Washington.



WDFW employees searching milkweed plants for evidence of monarch butterflies



Showy milkweed plant in bloom (asclepias speciosa)



A viceroy butterfly which mimics monarchs in appearance

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

Lamont Producer Damage Plan Master Hunter Training: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with seven of the 36 master hunters who volunteered to haze deer to reduce damage to irrigated crops near Lamont. Information from the landowner was shared with the volunteers. Hazing techniques, volunteer calendars, and contact information were also covered. Four more meetings will take place next week.

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

National Pheasant Coordinator Tour: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley spent time identifying Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields in Walla Walla County that represented the varying degrees of habitat, including monocultures of grass stands to grass stands with forbs and/or legumes. The new National Pheasant coordinator will be touring this part of the state next week.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Aechmophorus Grebes: District Wildlife Biologist Finger coordinated with Aulin Smith (Fish Program), who has been assisting with monitoring platforms opportunistically, and reports the following: On or before June 25, grebes arrived to Jones Bay, but no nests were present. They were all hanging out on the weed bed, approximately 50 yards from the platforms. On June 30, there were 50 grebes in Jones Bay and 13 nests, but none of the platforms were being used. More recent observations suggest the breeding colony is in full swing now (ca. 25 nests), with no activity associated with platforms. This unfortunate observation suggests that we may not be able to attract grebes away from their natural nesting areas into deeper open water.

Monarch Butterfly/Milkweed Training: Assistant Managers Eidson and Bechtold attended the monarch butterfly/ milkweed workshop. Speakers included members of the Xerces Society, WDFW staff members, and WSU staff members. A wealth of great knowledge was shared with the group, including monarch biology, migration, conservation, milkweed identification, and the identification of signs of monarch use on individual milkweed plants. The day concluded with a field trip to Lower Crab Creek to view butterflies and milkweed habitat.

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Comments for the Phase 2 application for the MFRP have come back from the RCO board, and Natural Resource Specialist Bass worked to finish updating the application and associated documents. The application was resubmitted to RCO to be weighed against other state projects. Phase 2 focuses heavily on prescribed fire and fuels treatments to restore fire regime and create ecosystem resiliency in Phase 1 units and other wildlife area forested habitat. Bass also began working on the progress report for Phase 1, which will be submitted to RCO.

Carlton Complex Fences: Manager Furnari spoke with CAMP's Anthony Sanich concerning a complaint she received from an AG lessee about the Texas Creek fence contractors driving through his crop field. On another area of the Methow, Mr. Boesel stopped by the office to

complain that the Methow northeast contractor had torn out sections of the east fence line without replacing them and he was going to be on his adjacent USFS allotment at the end of July. Manager Furnari spoke with two subcontractors with Fiddler Fence, whom are working on a different area of the fence project. The other Montana subcontractor *quit the job* and now they're stuck finishing up their work & someone else's. Manager Furnari met w/ Fiddler's Shawna B. in the field to review the eastern fence line. They identified fence line deficiencies, and Fiddler will relocate some of their workers to take care of this issue.

Frazer Creek Fencing: Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin and Assistant Manager Troyer spent a day inspecting recently constructed fence around Frazer Creek. Wottlin and Troyer accompanied WDFW's Anthony Sanich and Joel Molander, the general contractor from Town and Country, and the sub-contractor, D-Fence. Almost every H-brace was found to be improperly built. In general, the work illustrated by D-Fence was of poor quality. It sounds like the contractors will be required to go back through and make all necessary repairs before being paid. The repairs will almost certainly take the entire crew several days to complete. To be fair, the fences were straight and mostly within the specs, but the crew seemed to really struggle with building wooden braces and stretch points.

FEMA: Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin had a truly action packed week working on many FEMA related tasks. Wottlin fielded countless phone calls relating to fencing and made several field visits with contractors and inspectors. Wottlin also spent time this week completing the tedious and time consumptive task of updating FEMA logs and updating records of purchased materials relating to fencing projects. Assistant Manager Troyer also spent time this week updating his FEMA logs. Troyer and Wottlin both took turns teaching the WCC supervisor the dark art of FEMA record keeping. Speaking of WCC, they officially completed the buck and rail fence around Campbell Lake this week.

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock submitted 11 completed SAFE plans to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for review. Biologist Comstock spoke with a landowner in Grant County who is interested in enrolling approximately 1700 acres into SAFE. Unfortunately, we don't have the acres available at the time, but Biologist Comstock plans to meet with the landowner next week to review SAFE criteria and the enrollment process.

Biologist Comstock worked on her conservation plan for planner certification. Biologist Comstock met with her mentor to review the resource concerns checklists and CPA-52. They determined which assessment tools they need to run and made an appointment to meet again in August. Biologist Comstock met with Biologist Finger to discuss options for mitigating impacts to Washington ground squirrels within a SAFE field. Comstock needs to discuss options with the landowner and NRCS to finalize the site plan. Private Lands Biologist Braaten provided comments to Mike Kuttel, WDFW, about the opportunity to have some influence in mid-contract management practices within general and continuous CRP in Washington.

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

Wildlife Areas

Scotch Creek Headquarters Foot Bridge: Technicians Sklaney and Tissell constructed a new ATV/footbridge across Scotch Creek at headquarters. The materials used were locally sourced, and they are treated with a non-leaching wood preservative. The old culvert needed to be replaced for safety and improved fish passage. Disturbed soils will be leveled and seeded with native grasses to complete the project.



Culvert removed and bridge foundations set – Photo by Craig Tissell



Completed ATV/foot bridge – Photo by Craig Tissell

Private Lands/Access

Deer Issues: Specialist Heilhecker and Specialist Bridges visited an orchardist concerned with deer damage to new pear trees. Specialist Bridges installed his experimental deer deterrence system. Specialist Heilhecker spent additional time trying to track down a multitude of rumors the orchardist believes regarding the Department’s land purchases and pass court cases involving orchardists killing deer/elk. She will provide the orchardist with information when she and Specialist Bridges conduct a follow-up visit. Specialist Bridges and Specialist Heilhecker visited an Okanogan County landowner about deer depredation issues. A lot of time was spent with the landowner to understand his concerns, and heal old wounds from the past. We employed an experimental hazing method, which should work well for his situation.

Pronghorn antelope bucks in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW





Pleidae (pygmy backswimmer) –
Photo by C. McPherson



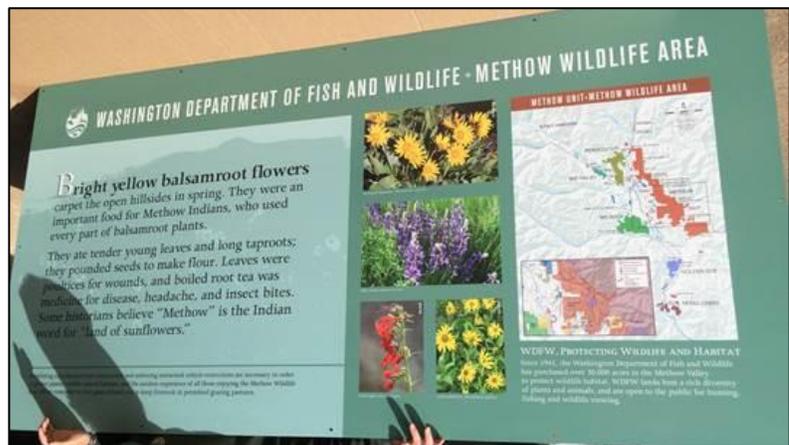
American badger (taxidea taxus) at den – Photo by
WDFW remote camera

Charismatic summer mulies –
Photo by Scott Fitkin

Twispworks Meeting: Assistant Manager Troyer attended the Wenner Lakes/Chalfa Dam meeting at Twispworks this week. Troyer felt a little out of the loop on the subject, but due to Manager Furnari’s resignation, Troyer will be representing the wildlife area until a new manager is hired.



One of seven kiosk signs received (Pipestone Canyon Lower/Balky Hill) – Photo by Sherry Furnari



*New gravel at Buzzard Lake boat launch –
Photo by M. DeHart*



REGION 3

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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician Kaelber used the Marsh Master to clear a series of beaver dams hindering water flow to the north irrigation pump station on Windmill Ranch. The pump station supplies water to Circles 1, 2, and 3, as well as a couple of habitat plots. A beaver trap was set and a beaver was successfully caught and relocated away from the problem area.



*Natural Resource Technician Kaelber
using the backhoe on the Marsh Master to
clear a beaver dam*

ALEA Grant Program: Manager Buser met with Larry Martin of the Richland Rod and Gun Club to visit and inspect several guzzlers the club improved through the ALEA Grant Program. Manager Buser has been the club’s Department contact for the grant and the site visit was for the annual report required by the grant process.



*A guzzler installed and maintained on
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
property by the Richland Rod and Gun Club*

WB-10 Wasteway Project: Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician Kaelber met with Ducks Unlimited to discuss the WB-10 Wasteway project. Ducks Unlimited surveyed the property this past winter and have been analyzing their data. Our next step is to identify potential options for developing managed wetlands on the unit.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey reviewed a bid package put together by Yakama Nation fisheries and Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group for the South Fork Cowiche Creek Floodplain enhancement project. The bid package includes timber harvest in Oak Creek, the transport of logs to Cowiche, and the installation of logs on Cowiche Creek. Huffman provided multiple comments to improve the bid package.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky and WDFW Forester Rod Pfeifle visited the Mission Ridge Ski Area this week to assess a possible forest habitat improvement project on WDFW lands there. Forest stands at the ski area are heavily overstocked and at risk of insect or fire outbreaks.



Rod Pfeifle and Mission Ridge Ski Area Mountain Operations Director Brad Whiting inspect timber stands at Mission Ridge, Colockum Wildlife Area



Mission Ridge Ski Area downhill ski run bordered by dense forest stands

Integrated Weed Control Project: The Colockum received 1800 biocontrol insects for Russian knapweed this week from Washington State University Cooperative Extension’s Integrated



Weed Control Project. *Jaapiella ivannikovi* is a gall midge that deposits eggs on the shoots of Russian knapweed. Larval feeding causes stunted growth of the shoot and a growing together and fusion of leaves, resulting in the galls on the plant. Assistant Manager Hagan released the insects in the Brushy Creek area, while Manager Lopushinsky released insects in the Colockum Creek drainage. Hagan filled out the required release forms that will be sent back to Cooperative Extension.

*An example of galls formed on a Russian knapweed plant from *Jaapiella ivannikovi**

Wildlife Management

Yakima Delta Habitat Enhancement Project: District Biologist Fidorra participated in a meeting with representatives from WDFW, Benton County, and Mid-Columbia Fishery Enhancement Group to discuss pathways forward on the Yakima Delta Habitat Enhancement Project. Staff members and partners will work to contact local stakeholder groups to provide accurate information regarding the project goals, which are to 1) provide water flow through the Bateman Island causeway, 2) provide public access to the island, and 3) protect marina and boat launch facilities downstream. Fidorra later met with representatives of the Audubon Society to discuss the project and address any questions.

Monarch Workshop: District Biologist Fidorra attended the Monarch Workshop in Quincy with WDFW staff members. Fidorra and others will be surveying for monarchs and milkweed in 2016 and 2017. Fidorra conducted monarch and milkweed surveys in Franklin County and was able to locate several larger patches of showy milkweed, but did not observe any monarchs.



WDFW staff members searching for monarch larvae at Lower Crab Creek on showy milkweed monarch host plants

Mourning Dove Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra trapped mourning doves at the Ringold Hatchery site. Numbers remain low, with few juveniles. A total of 35 doves have been trapped over four attempts. Fidorra and hatchery staff members will continue to bait and trap doves into mid-August, and additional sites may be considered.

Bat Survey: District Biologist Fidorra continued the WDFW bat survey, and placed acoustic bat detectors at sites in Districts 4 and 5. Fidorra coordinated with District 5 Assistant Biologist Rowan to relocate detectors near the Ephrata office. Fidorra is placing detector at eight sites, and will repeat recording protocols at each site monthly through August.

Jackrabbit: District Biologist Fidorra sent a dead black-tailed jackrabbit specimen to Washington State University for diagnostics.

SAFE Applications: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman finished up the conservation plans for three SAFE applications. Although the plans are finished, Stutzman will wait until after harvest to obtain signatures.

SAFE Boundary Expansion: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with three Benton County landowners about the proposed SAFE boundary expansion. All three are in support of the proposal, and Stutzman worked with them to draft letters of support. Stutzman sent the letters on to Farm Bill Coordinator Kuttel for inclusion.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz ran traps for two days. A total of 22 doves have been banded this year, with eight being recaptures from previous years. Only one hatch-year bird was captured. Reports and sightings throughout the region have revealed few doves, almost all adults. It appears recruitment was extremely low. New sites have been baited in hopes of getting closer to quotas. Trapping will be continued periodically through mid-August.

Monarch Butterfly Training/Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz attended the training and started making contacts and looking for milkweed. Milkweed appears to be fairly common throughout ditches/wet areas in the district, but patches are fairly small. Dr. David James has surveyed local patches in past years, but failed to find monarch butterflies.

Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis: Time was spent searching the USGS Earthexplorer website to find a year with multiple quality images during the months of January through May. All of our current data resulted from a search in 2011, and nothing was found for the winter and early spring. Moore searched back to 2004 in hopes to find a year with more than two images for this timeframe. Winter cloud cover made this a difficult task. Images were collected within this timeframe over multiple years. An additional twelve Landsat 5 scenes were found clear of cloud cover from 2006 to 2010. Although this is not ideal, it will allow us to gain some insight on the early part of the growing season.

Time was also spent developing 90% confidence intervals around the mean estimates of NDVI data collected for each herd and scene, as well as determining if they can be represented by a normal distribution.

Livestock/Wolf Interaction Presentations: Biologist Moore attended a WDFW teleconference presentation that featured four research projects. The presentations focused on different aspects of livestock/wolf interactions in Washington State.

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

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker picked up garbage in all of the parking lots on the Wildlife area. Natural Resource Worker Becker had to paint over some graffiti in the McGee RD parking lot.



Before pictures of the McGee parking lot



After pictures of the McGee parking lot

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Leuck traveled the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area replacing No Unauthorized Vehicle signage on gates where they had been torn down (former Plum Creek ownership). Leuck found the gate on Section 15 in T18N, R15E open and a lot of vehicle tracks on the upper end of that system. This would indicate that someone has a key who shouldn't. He closed and locked the gate.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Environmental Planner Posner met with three stakeholder groups, Motorized Recreation, Horseback Riders, and Bird Dog Trainers, during the week to get their thoughts and ideas on the Wenas Target Shooting Project. Confer Morris and Posner will be meeting with other stakeholder groups in the coming week.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a new elk damage complaint near Horn Rapids within the Richland city limits. A group of nine bull elk have been raiding a circle of highly valuable organic feed corn and assistance with deterrence measures was requested. Several nonlethal strategies, such as LP gas cannons and pyrotechnics, were discussed and will be implemented. One shot launcher and pyrotechnic supplies were loaned to the producer.

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued with coordinating and conducting hazing of elk in several winter wheat fields in the Rattlesnake Mountain area. Strong numbers (hundreds) of elk continue to leave Hanford and forage in wheat fields during the night hours.

Coyotes: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a report of coyotes harassing an elk calf in the Silver Dollar area. It appeared as if the calf became separated from its mother within a fenced vineyard, but later was hazed to an area where it could escape and rejoin the herd.

Deer Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted a site visit to a tree fruit and wine grape operation near McNary Dam along the Columbia River in southern Benton County to monitor deer activity and document damage areas. Very little activity has occurred in the wine grape blocks and only moderate use was noted in the orchard.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Technician Leuck rode the elk fence and KRD from Manastash to the Heart K ranch and did not find any holes in the fence. He also put up cameras in historical trouble spots. Along the way, he found 30 cow and calf elk around the Ragland pastures and hazed them west along Taneum Creek back into the wildlife area. There are a few sections of the fence that will need bracing soon, as they are leaning out substantially.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff members participated in the preconstruction meeting for the upcoming south boundary fence construction project with CAMP engineers, project inspectors and the fence contractor. An Oregon-based company, Doherty Fence, LLC, has been awarded the contract to build 5.5 miles of Colockum boundary/livestock fence damaged by the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Fire. Part of the contract work includes felling dead trees along the fence that pose a hazard to the fence and fence workers, and Colockum staff members will be marking these trees next week to indicate which ones should be dropped.

Oak Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias repaired a West Valley hay barn roof that had suffered wind damage and reattached the supports which had come loose due to years of wind causing the whole barn to sway. Staff members will have to return with long screws to make sure the supports don't come loose again.



Before and after of hay barn flashing repairs to West Valley hay barn

French's Canyon Gate Repair: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias made repairs to vandalized French's Canyon gates and supporting posts, and re-stretched the wire. While in the area, Berry and Farias replaced the map that was stolen off the kiosk on the upper French's Road.

Eyes in the Woods: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias met with Eyes in the Woods volunteers on setting up a camera system in French's Canyon. This would be to try and identify the people vandalizing the gates.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome: District 12 and Administrative Assistant Cary finalized the collection of guano traps that have been out since late April. Pooled guano will be submitted to USGS National Wildlife Health Lab per their protocol and correspondence. Acoustic efforts throughout the Snoqualmie Valley continue.

District 12 and Bats Northwest continued July night acoustic surveys of maternity season bats on all Lower Snoqualmie Valley wildlife management units for July. One unit was covered, with the other two still in the mix for the month in and around weather considerations.

A second bat, collected in March of this year by Seattle/King County Department of Health, processed, and sent to the Washington Department of Health for repository, was found positive in carrying the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd). Pd is the fungus that can cause

white-nose syndrome in certain species of bats. Silver-haired bats (this particular specimen) are not known to be affected by Pd, but are known to carry the fungus – as in this specimen. This illustrates the importance of passive surveillance of dead and dying bats for the presence of Pd or clinical signs of white-nose syndrome.

WDFW and collaborators are asking the public to report dead or dying/sick bats via our hotline found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>

Decontamination is essential to assist in the management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist communities, including caving, climbing, and canyoneering.

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

District 12 participated in a number of cross-agency conference calls and internal calls, and also reviewed the media release regarding the aforementioned second Pd positive bat from King County. Staff members answered questions from a representative with American Forest Foundation regarding bats, white-nose syndrome, bat health, and silvicultural practices.



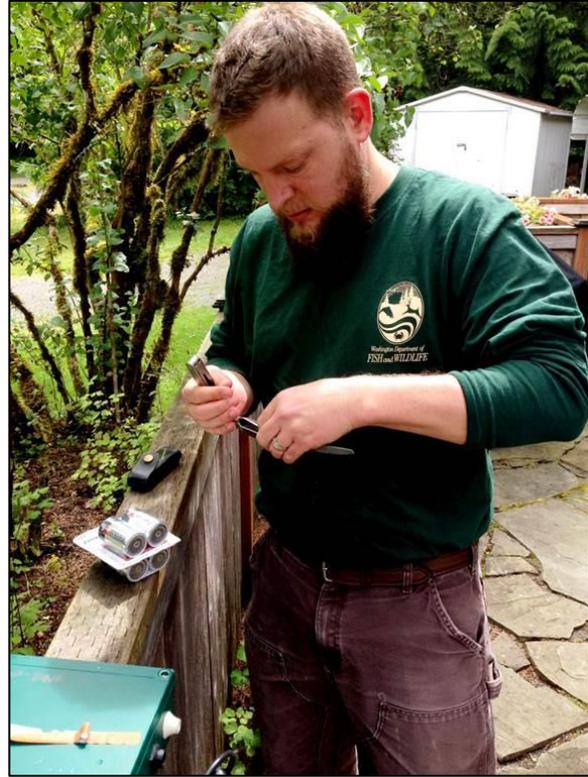
Biologist Anderson collected guano from under a bridge near the location of the first known white-nose syndrome positive bat in Washington and the western states. This bridge was cleaned of all old guano in April to provide for collection of 2016 guano for testing – Photo by C. Cary, WDFW



A very high tech guano trap – Photo C. Cary, WDFW



Day roosting bat observed under bridge during guano retrieval – Photo C. Cary, WDFW



District 12 retrieving acoustic data, switching out batteries, and redeploying recording unit –Photo by C. Cary, WDFW

Other: District 12 fielded calls for information and reports of bats, and took samples of wildlife to send off for testing (not bat related). They also attempted to catch up on administrative needs.

North Cascades Elk: Biologist Yarborough recovered an elk collar from a dead elk near Hamilton. The elk had been dead for quite a while, so no cause of death could be determined.

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to continue internal access road and trail improvements. Truckloads of wood chips are being donated and delivered by a local land clearing business. The chips will form a base on the roads to allow vehicle traffic during the fall and winter season.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm cleaned up an illegal dump at the Ebey Island Unit. The dump consisted of household furniture and was hauled away to the Snohomish County Transfer Station. Manager Boehm will utilize the new DOE Litter Grant to pay the disposal fee.



Ebey Island dump site

Corson Natural Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with the CAMP construction crew for project staging at the Corson Unit. A fish passage project is under way for the next three weeks to replace fish passage barriers on the unit. Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored fields, weeds, and crop/moist-soil plant progress on the Island Unit. Cosgrove disked three low areas in the #1, Ole Thompson, and Seattle Pond

fields on the Island Unit for vegetation management to promote emergent plant growth for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Fir Island Farm Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Friebel, and NOAA Restoration Biologist Polly Hicks installed two rod set elevation tables (rSETs) in the restoration area. The rSETs will measure how much the marsh elevation changes, as well as sedimentation rates, after tidal processes are restored.



The metal rod is driven 60' into the ground and then encased in concrete. Because it is driven so far into the ground, it won't change in elevation and will serve as the benchmark for measurements of the surrounding marsh.



Four plots of white clay surround the metal rod. Following the restoration project, biologists will take core samples in the plots and will measure the amount of sediment deposited above the clay layer.



The installation crew poses at one of the newly completed rSET stations

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw planned agendas and sent out meeting materials to attendees of two upcoming Leque Island meetings. Neighboring landowners will meet to review modeling results and the preliminary project design,

and the Recreation and Access Committee will meet for the first time to brainstorm recreation feature ideas to add to the site.

Private Lands/Access Management

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Prospects: District 14 staff completed the 2016 Hunting Prospects document. This document provides the most current information related to population, recent harvest, access, and other valuable information for hunters in District 14.

District 12 initiated work on annual status and trends, as well as hunting prospects.

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Spring Surveys: Biologist DeBruyn arose at 0300 three days in a row to survey band-tailed pigeon abundance at three mineral springs in Whatcom and Skagit counties.





“At the Mineral Spring” barred owl, band-tailed pigeon, and common yellowthroat

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the expanded summer bird dog training area is completely mowed. New staff member Tom Wampler completed the mowing this week. He also conducted periodic maintenance on the tractor and mower.



Expanded training area mowed

Upland Game Bird Hunting: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the review of the District 13 Upland Game Bird and Waterfowl Pamphlet for the 2016-2017 hunting season.

Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis removed sand from last year's dredging of the Headquarters Unit boat launch and placed it in the Headquarters equipment storage area.

Cosgrove and Meis applied herbicides to an area of reed canary grass in Lorenzen field on the Island Unit, sprayed weeds in the parking, equipment storage area, and dike-top trail at the Headquarters Unit, and sprayed broadleaf weeds at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough and Moberg units.

Meis sprayed poison hemlock areas located on the Leque Unit.

Samish River Unit Billing: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with Fiscal on invoices for WDFW to be reimbursed from NRCS on tasks completed for the Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project.

Private Lands/Access Management

Westside Pheasant Release Program: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard toured north Whidbey Island private land pheasant release sites for cover potential for the upcoming hunting season. Biologist Wingard contacted a real estate agent about a potential property that looks like it would provide excellent pheasant hunting. Unfortunately, the real estate agent relayed that the property is under a very complicated ownership and the potential of wrangling all the interests together is highly unlikely. The search to expand pheasant hunting areas in Region 4 continues.



Juvenile common loon (gavia immer)



Horned grebe (podiceps auritus)

Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued collecting data and preparing the post-hunt report. All data collection will be complete shortly. Natural Resource Technician Otto toured a few gated road systems checking for historic and recent damage to trees caused by bears. Otto located multiple damaged tree stands. While in the unit, Otto received a call from a partner landowner that also runs a road clearing business for these road systems. He had a worker close by who needed assistance with a ride back after his tractor mower broke down five miles from his vehicle. The landowner was very appreciative.

Waterfowl Hunt Units Barley Planting: Natural Resource Technician Otto and Private Lands Biologist Wingard checked recent crop plantings. The plantings looked positive. There is plenty of growth in the barley with excellent coverage in a variety of fields on or surrounding current quality hunt fields.

VPA Site Ranking: Private Lands Biologist Wingard spent time ranking Region 4 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites. These rankings will help justify and prioritize spending by providing more qualitative measures of the site quality.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Contracts: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts for waterfowl quality hunt units in the region. Natural Resource Technician Otto met with a landowner in Whatcom to sign this year's Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program contract. Otto met with several other partner landowners to check on the status of their property for enrollment.

Special Elk Permit Private Land Hunting: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a landowner interested in providing private land elk hunting opportunity to 418 and 4941 special permit holders. This property will provide a unique valley floor elk hunting opportunity for special permit holders and help manage elk-related damage on neighboring properties.

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Wildlife Management

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked on an elk exclusionary fence project in Day Creek. The producer is growing organic corn, which is sustaining damage from elk. The current fence lines are overgrown with grass and blackberry. The producer was notified to clear the fence lines so electric fencing can be installed. Witman and Cogdal worked with a landowner bordering State Route 20 in Skagit County to haze elk off the property. The elk herd of 17 was successfully hazed off the property and crossed north of State Route 20 without incident. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell responded to a deer damage complaint on Whidbey Island. Supervisor Caldwell is set to perform a site visit at the property in the coming weeks to assess eligibility and safety concerns. Supervisor Caldwell and District Biologist Yarborough assisted Regional Managers with technical materials for public responses and for upcoming meeting discussions.

Hunting Access: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with Skagit Land Trust to discuss elk hunting access on private properties bordering Grandy Creek in Skagit County.

Turkey Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell moved forward with permit/master hunter options for a landowner experiencing chronic turkey damage and safety problems. Supervisor Caldwell will meet with this landowner next week to discuss further details.

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in Core Team conference calls to discuss and plan next steps for the planning process. In the works are a follow-up meeting with the dog training sub-group members and a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) meeting scheduled for August 3.

Maintenance: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers, prepared equipment, and ferried a side-arm mower and tractor off of the Island Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Whidbey Diversity Site: Natural Resource Technician Otto responded to a large tree blocking access to this site near the town of Langley. Otto made sure the trail system was accessible and conducted vegetation control.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated four new hunter education classes in Region 4 and assisted the instructor on Lopez Island to post a class. Dazey forwarded the Spanish language hunter education quiz to a bilingual instructor. Dazey also provided information to the Region 4 instructors on how to report instructor hours on Kalkomey so the data is consistent and not doubled. Dazey assisted an instructor new to the area to find a team to join in order to continue teaching.

Master Hunter Advisory Group: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey worked with the Region 3 coordinator to reach out to the conflict and wildlife area staff members in Regions 1 and 2 to meet so the coordinators can better assist them in find and using volunteers. Better use of volunteers will make it easier to meet the goals in those areas. Dazey continues to work on the master hunter orientation scheduled to take place on the west side on August 1 in Mountlake Terrace. Invites have gone out to key presenters and Dazey, along with the Region 3 Coordinator Garcia, continues to work on the PowerPoint presentation and other logistics. A reminder was sent to the Region 4 master hunter applicants for 2016, advising them of the approaching deadline and encouraging them to complete their service hours and their CORT training. Dazey previewed and assisted Specialist Thorson to edit letters and documents intended for the Master Hunter Advisory Group on the corn stubble and hunt access in Region 2. The access is especially important in order to meet the master hunter commitment to provide youth hunt opportunities.

Public Outreach: Coordinator Dazey reached out to the Region 4 hunter education instructors to enlist their help in publicizing the WDFW Firearm Safety bookmark contest. More information can be found on the hunter education webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/huntered/index.html>. Dazey forwarded the news release concerning the Okanogan County limited-entry deer hunt application process to the instructors and master hunters in Region 4. This information was very well received, with Dazey receiving many thank you emails for forwarding the information. A number of the recipients indicated that after receiving the release from Dazey, they went online to apply.

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

Wildlife Areas

Performance and Development Plan: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the annual performance evaluation and development plan for 2016-2017.

Ducks Unlimited Meeting: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove prepared a map and associated photos of low areas of the "pony dike" at the Samish Unit in preparation for a meeting next week with a Ducks Unlimited representative to discuss retrofits to last year's water control project.

Pressure Washing: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove pressure-washed the interpretive center at the Headquarters Unit in preparation for painting by a volunteer in the coming weeks.

Skagit Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Specialist Meis prepared maps and updated information of Skagit Wildlife Area Units for District 13 and 14 Hunting Prospects for 2016.

Private Lands/Access Management

Vehicle Maintenance: Natural Resource Technician Otto conducted and coordinated maintenance on his work truck tires, gator ATV, flatbed trailer, chainsaws, and weed eaters in preparation for the upcoming hunting season.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Instructor Advisory Committee: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended the Instructor Advisory Committee member selection board at the Olympia Headquarters. With 15 positions available and 24 applicants, the selection group had many qualified applicants to choose from. Following the selection meeting, Dazey previewed and assisted program specialist Thorson to edit the selection letters that will be sent out.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Elk Hoof Disease Survival Study: Biologists George and Holman followed up on an elk mortality this week in the Margaret Game Management Unit (GMU). The elk was found largely consumed by predators / scavengers in forested wetland. The cause of this elk's death is undetermined due to the lack of suitable samples for collection. The elk was part of a four year study implemented to estimate the survival of adult female cow elk affected by treponeme-associated hoof disease. The study will also focus on the effects of the disease on elk

reproduction and movement patterns. Currently, there are 65 elk of the Mount St. Helens Herd monitored continuously for this study. For more information on treponeme-associated hoof disease in elk, please visit the hoof disease webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/

Monarch Survey Training: Biologist Bergh and Volunteer Flick attended training on milkweed and monarch surveys at the Lower Crab Creek Wildlife Area near Quincy. Monarch butterflies in Washington overwinter on the California coast and surveys there have indicated a nearly 50% decline from the 18-year average. Monarchs only lay their eggs on milkweed plants because monarch caterpillars will only eat milkweed, so this plant is vital to the butterflies. Little is known about the distribution of monarchs and milkweed in the west, and in the next two years the surveys in Washington will seek to gather this baseline information.



Milkweed at the Lower Crab Creek Wildlife Area

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Biologists Butler, Bergh, Anderson, and Stephens all participated in a week of trapping for western pond turtles. The goal of the week was to catch 12-16 turtles afflicted with undefined shell disease (USD) and send them to the Oregon Zoo for treatment by Dr. Storms. Six of the turtles are severely affected with USD and five of those are reproductive-age adult females, which are the most important part of the population. The other ten turtles captured last week ranged from mild to moderate cases of USD. The treatment is still very experimental because the etiology of the disease is still unknown, so having a variety of cases of USD will help inform veterinarians as to the effectiveness of the treatment. Thank you to the Oregon Zoo for their help with this project. Two turtles treated for USD last year were caught this past week and looked to be doing well.



One of last year's treated western pond turtles

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Purple Loosestrife Removal: A few weeks ago was the start to the purple loosestrife eradication season for Assistant Manager Hand. Purple loosestrife, *lythrum salicaria*, is a perineal invasive plant that will out-compete native plants and eventually alter a wetland's structure and function if left untreated. One mature plant can produce upwards of 2 million

seeds annually. The growing season for purple loosestrife is typically from July-September. However, this year had an early bloom. Every ten days, Assistant Manager Hand walks the



shoreline of Vancouver Lake Wildlife Area and uses an herbicide application on any plants found. He also does a grid-like patrol in the Lakebed of the North Unit of Shillapoo to accurately find and control loosestrife there. This area has been treated since 2009 and data from each season of the total number of treated plants has been recorded. In 2009, 612 plants were treated, and in 2015 only 158 plants were located and treated.

Purple loosestrife removal in South Cell Wetland, South Unit of Shillapoo

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

Access: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes picked and hauled over 500 pounds of trash this week on the access sites. In addition, they found romantic graffiti painted on the asphalt parking lot at the Silver lake Boat launch.



Romantic graffiti

Shillapoo South: An abandoned car with no back door and a mannequin head propped up with a stick in the driver's seat was found and is being processed by Enforcement. Apparently, the car hasn't been reported stolen, but it appears to be abandoned on one of the Shillapoo sites.



Abandoned car with mannequin



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

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin set a bear trap with WDFW Police in a Centralia neighborhood.

Bear trap

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gopher Reserve Design: Biologist Tirhi has applied through USFWS for funding for a Conservation Easement on 90 acres of private property in Thurston County containing Mazama pocket gophers. All indications from USFWS are that this Conservation Easement will be successfully funded. Tirhi met with WDFW Lands Division and Wildlife Program staff members, USFWS, NRCS, Center for Natural Land Management (CNLM), and the property owner to discuss specifics to be contained in a final Stewardship Plan for his property once notification is received. The content of the plan will include details of crop management, pocket gopher preservation, and all obligations of both the Conservation Easement owner (WDFW) and the landowner.

Common Loon: One or more adult loons have been observed on Alder Lake in Pierce County during the early breeding season for several years, including 2016 (see previous weekly

reports). Biologist Tirhi and Michaelis completed a final survey of Alder Lake by motorized boat this week and neither saw nor heard loons. Tirhi also kayak-surveyed an area suspected of supporting breeding loons, but found none. It's highly possible that loons are attempting to nest early in the season on the lake, but due to fluctuating water levels they are unable to be successful. Tirhi has discussed possibly installing an artificial, floating platform in February 2017 with other staff members and collaborators to increase potential nesting success.

Snowy Plover

Leadbetter: Technician Raby conducted nest and brood searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter.

2016 Leadbetter and Island Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
47	5	20	19	3

Midway: Biologist Michaelis conducted nest status and nest searches at Midway Beach. Several nests were gone from the preceding week and it was unknown if the nests had successfully hatched or failed. No new nests were detected and he observed only two juveniles.

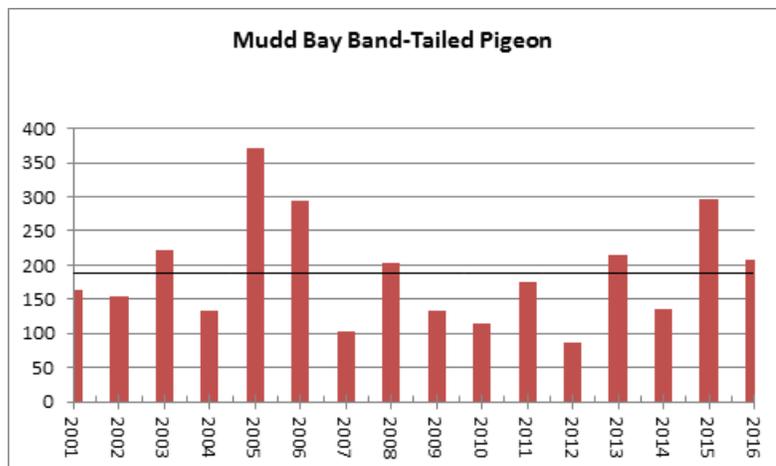
Oyhut and Copalis Spit: Biologist Novack conducted a final survey for snowy plovers at Oyhut and Copalis Spit. No birds were seen.

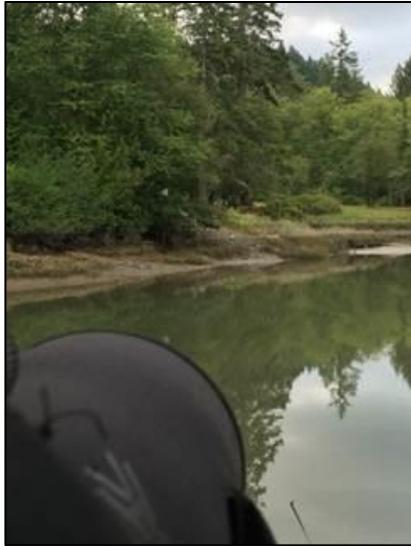
Cormorant Survey- North Willapa Bay: Biologist Michaelis surveyed channel markers in north Willapa Bay. Seven nests on one platform were observed. Surveys next year may expand if cormorants displaced from the Columbia River begin to nest in Grays Harbor or Willapa Bay.

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

Wildlife Management

Band-tailed Pigeon: Biologist Tirhi completed the annual survey of the Mud Bay band-tailed pigeon mineral site. A high of 208 band-tails (203 adults, five juveniles) were counted over the six hour survey which begins at sunrise. This is a slight decline compared to 2015 survey results, but comparable to the 16-year trend. The Oyster Bay survey will be completed this week.





Mud Bay band-tailed pigeon survey, with band-tails on shore and at tree line (2016)

Land Acquisition: Biologist Tirhi met with Land Managers Cannon and Coffman to finalize land acquisition grant paperwork to WWRP for the West Rocky Prairie Phase 2016 and Scatter Creek Wildlife Area 2016 addition. Final grant paperwork has been submitted to RCO for 2016. Tirhi is now working on final presentation material. Both presentations are August 18. Tirhi recently presented both projects to the Thurston County Commissioners, at their request, in order to seek county support for both acquisition projects.

Hunting Prospects: Biologist Novack initiated work on the Hunting Prospects document. He reached out to over 1,000 successful hunters from 2015 to obtain photos of animals harvested within the district for inclusion into this year’s prospects. About eight submissions have been received.

Mourning Dove Banding: Biologist Michaelis began trapping and banding mourning doves at two locations. On Friday morning, a total of 20 doves (17 hatch year and three adults) were banded. One bird escaped while collecting birds from the traps. Four doves were captured Sunday evening (two adult females and two hatch year). Doves are captured and banded to assess annual survival and harvest rates. Migration information is also obtained.



Officer Cilk’s son Brandon holding an adult female mourning dove. Note the brownish coloration on the breast, the turquoise colored eye ring and overall absence of the “rose” coloration displayed by males.



Sabra Noyes (landowner) and volunteer Kerri Whelker, each holding a male grosbeak. Many other non-target species are captured and released including: Stellars jays, brown-headed cowbirds, western goldfinch, and a young rabbit!

Wildlife Areas

Kiosks: Biologists Hays and Cook, along with Manager Belson, updated and enhanced informational kiosks at the Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area units. Updates on wildlife area rules/regulations, maps, hunting information, e-Bird links, and other notices were posted on the new kiosks recently installed by Eagle Scout Pasko at each of the three Scatter Creek Unit parking areas. The key elements of new postings relating to public use were also uploaded to the unit webpage. New prairie and oak woodland outreach and educational displays were installed at both wildlife area units. These latter displays were funded through a multipurpose State Wildlife Grant and are but a few of many similar displays that will be posted by partner conservation organizations throughout the prairie regions of western Washington and Oregon.



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

Wildlife Areas

Scatter Creek Improvement: Managers Gerchak and Belson, Assistant Manager Gallegos, and Wildlife Area Assistants R. Vanblaricom and D. Vanblaricom made improvements to the north parking area at the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area North Tract Unit. The 1.5-acre parking area has long suffered chronic littering and dumping, especially in a half-acre portion that contains several hidden driveways and parking areas. Based on the types of litter present, it also serves as a convenient location for a variety of other illegal activities and provides a secluded overnight stopover for suspected outlaws. A 300-foot stretch of the parking area was barricaded using forty 4-foot ecology blocks delivered by a local manufacturer. The project was funded primarily through an inter-agency agreement (#C1600181) with the Department of Ecology for litter and illegal dump cleanup and prevention.

