Wildlife Program

Week of May 9 – May 15, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Headquarters Wolf Activities

Pre Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd participated in a conference call with Wolf Policy Lead Martorello to discuss many concerns brought forward by WAG members prior to the in-person meeting.

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting: Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialists Bennett, Earl, Rasley, and Shepherd attended the WAG meeting in Ellensburg and discussed different aspects of lethal removal of gray wolves in Washington. After a final two days, a draft protocol was developed for the upcoming grazing season. Further follow-up with livestock operators will be needed after the protocol is finalized for this year.

Region 1 Wolf Activities

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

Stevens County Ranch Visit: Biologist Shepherd and Technician Bendixen visited with the owner of a ranch in Stevens County. The owners spotted large canines which were most likely wolf in an area where the Stranger Pack collar has been. The apparent wolves were near the calving pasture the night before the discussion. Biologist Shepherd discussed a cost share agreement among other wolf related topics.

Ferry County Ranch Visit: Biologist Shepherd visited with the manager and owner of a ranch in Ferry County. Biologist Shepherd discussed a cost share agreement among other wolf related topics. The owner and manager signed a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock: Biologist Shepherd visited with the owner of a ranch in Stevens County. The owner re-signed a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock.

Grazing Season Preparation and Indirect Loss Claim: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with producers from the Huckleberry area about upcoming plans for the summer grazing season. Historic collared wolf locations, wolf mitigation measures, and their indirect loss claim were discussed.

Producer Meeting: Supervisor McCanna worked with Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Holzmiller and Region 1 Director Pozzanghera to develop an agenda for a producer meeting in Clarkston the evening of May 18.

Trail Cameras: Natural Resource Technician Wade collected the memory cards from trail cameras in Asotin County. Biologist Earl coordinated with a producer near the Oregon border to gather cameras placed behind a locked gate.

Livestock Compensation: Biologist Earl talked to the producer who lost a calf to a confirmed depredation. His claim was being reviewed by FSA this week and he will be getting an answer from them next week.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe checked on the Wise Territory nest to see if any hawks had hatched yet. Three small downy chicks 4-7 days old were present. A dead adult racer (*Coluber constrictor)* was found on the gravel road into the area.

Looking down at three ferruginous hawk chicks in cliff nest

Habitat Project: Biologist Lewis completed some mowing at a habitat project in the Cheney area. The mowing was to knock down plant competition in a tree planting area. The tree planting has had good survival and should benefit from the mowing and reduced competition. The project is in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

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

Discovery Week: This annual program sponsored by the Lake Roosevelt Forum, and funded through the Bonneville Power Administration, again included a tour of the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area, titled "Home on the Range," among field trip options. On Tuesday and Thursday, three different groups of elementary schoolchildren came out and were treated to a visit from a Fish and Wildlife Officer, a walking tour of the wildlife

area's interior, a slide show of activities and accomplishments at Swanson Lakes, and an exhibit of skins and skulls of area birds and mammals.

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

Human Safety Concerns for Canada Geese by Interstate 90: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, WDFW Enforcement Officers, and local law enforcement attempted to capture the two adult and five goslings. Due to the adult geese's ability to fly, the adults were unable to be captured. The five goslings were removed and adopted to another local Canada goose family. The two original adults later flew away from the interstate.

CRP-Palouse SAFE: Lewis met with the local Farm Service Agency CRP representative to discuss new State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) projects. Lewis reviewed potential new projects and applications for enrollment into the SAFE program. The requests add up to about 2,500 acres, but the program only has approximately 1,000 acres available.

Peola Elk: Natural Resource Technician Wade checked on the Peola elk two different days this week. The elk are currently on the Wildlife Area side of the fence, but are actively testing the fence in attempts to get to the farm field on the other side.

Herd of elk moving back and forth along the elk fence in Garfield County

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

Teamwork: Baarstad and Bendixen met with District Wildlife Biologist Base, USFS, and NWTF staff members to discuss future NWTF partnership projects in Region 1. Several cooperative projects with NWTF are planned over the next couple years.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Washington Ground Squirrels: District Wildlife Biologists Finger and Rowan, Biologist McPherson, Technicians Quayle and Erlenbach, and Maintenance Mechanic Graves trapped squirrels in a Department of Transportation (DOT) right-of-way along Highway 17. Traps were also deployed to the Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area to reduce squirrel density in the large pygmy rabbit enclosure. Staff members worked with the USFWS to ear-tag and release ground squirrels to assess the colony sizes and degree to which ground squirrels might be crossing Highway 17. A few squirrels were translocated to the USFWS Columbia National Wildlife Refuge enclosure, which is a population augmentation project underway.

Monarch Butterflies and Milkweed: District Wildlife Biologists Finger and Rowan, along with Technicians Quayle and Erlenbach, worked on preparations for milkweed (Asclepias spp.) surveys. We have devised a preliminary survey, reached out to the Washington Native Plant Society and local Universities for information, and collected numerous sightings along irrigation wasteways in Grant County so far.

Leopard Frogs, Waterfowl, and Invertebrates: Biologist McPherson continued to work through the identification of invertebrates from round one of sampling. Biologist McPherson is encountering invertebrate family orders in the Northern Leopard Management Area fish free sample sites that have not been seen in other areas of the project. The invertebrate photo catalog is growing in diversity and now is up to around 20 different families of invertebrates.

Curculionidae (snout beetle) – Photo by Chattan McPherson

***Ichneumonidae (ichneumon wasp)* –** Photo by Chattan McPherson

***Belostomidae (giant water bug)* –** Photo by Chattan McPherson

Wildlife Areas

Personnel: The entire burn team participated together in their first prescribed burn of the year in the Chesaw Wildlife Area. Due to the remote location of the project area, the team set up camp on site for the week. The 96 acre Straw Unit was completed and secured. Most of the hoselay was also installed on the Idaho Unit in preparation for the next burning. Two contract squads of five crew members each were hired to assist with the burning, which contributed to a healthy economy and supported the local Chesaw community since the crews purchased some of their meals in Chesaw.

***Chesaw prescribed burn camp* –** Photo by Tom Leuschen

***WDFW prescribed burn team completes firing on the Straw Mountain burn* –** Photo by Tom Leuschen

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenner Lakes/Chalfa Dam: Manager Furnari attended the monthly Benson Creek neighborhood meeting. She then went out to review the site with Habitat Biologist Hofmann to see how far CAMP's repair crew had gotten. The *shared* road was improved, the lake is being siphoned, and the remnant second dam structures were removed and the berm/roadbed lowered to begin creation of a ford. Their schedule/efforts are being impacted by the increasing water levels that continue to fill the lake while they're trying to empty it. CAMP's Weider Molano said they would eventually need sand to fill their large sand bags for the project. Manager Furnari contacted one of the neighbors with a large amount of unwanted sand (received from a flood event) on their agricultural field. They could work with CAMP to remove some of the material for their project.

Draining Wenner Lakes-Chalfa Dam – Photo by Sherry Furnari

Private Lands/Access

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Planner Training: Biologist Comstock attended this four day training in Ellensburg, which was attended by approximately 40 participants. The conservation planner training leads to a certification as a NRCS Conservation Planner 3, after completing a real conservation plan. This effort promises to be time consuming. Private Lands Biologist Braaten was one of two WDFW staff members who attended the four day training in Ellensburg discussing the NRCS and Washington State Conservation Districts (WACD) conservation planning process.

Conservation planners in training – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

Western iris – Photo by Devon Comstock

A balloonist out for a morning flight in the valley – Photo by Sherry Furnari

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

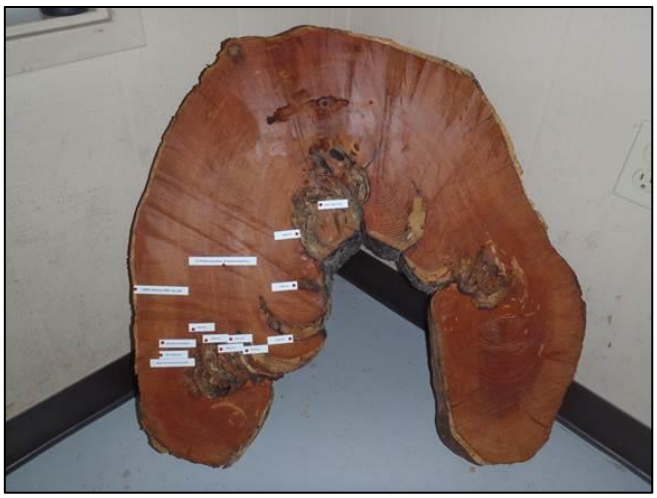
L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt met with DNR Zoologist John Fleckenstein, who is looking for pools of water on the wildlife area that might contain fairy shrimp. Winegeart marked several potential sites on maps for John to take into the field.

Grazing Monitoring: Natural Resource Technician 2 Leuck completed 'cow-off' grazing monitoring in the Vantage Highway pasture. There was a lot of grass left for the remaining elk on the winter range. Leuck observed a couple cow elk hanging out near the springs in the brushy draws. They will most likely be calving in the area, as calving season is only two weeks away.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman picked up biological control agents for dalmatian toadflax from the Yakima County Noxioius Weed Board. WSU had dropped off the insects in Yakima the previous evening. Manager Huffman used the Ranger to access the Garret Canyon/Sanford Pasture area to look for toadflax release sites. Huffman released insects at one additional site in Garret Canyon where few insects were present on plants. This area has had multiple releases over the last six or more years, but toadflax continues to expand its distribution. Huffman continued toward the Sanford Pasture area and released bio controls at three additional sites where toadflax is expanding. This area was scheduled for chemical control using a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation grant, but due to the private landowner no longer allowing WDFW access at Mud Lake, the project is not feasible. While in the area, Huffman observed a group of 200+ elk.

Wildflowers in the foreground and Sanford Pasture in the mid-ground from the top of Cleman Mountain of Oak Creek Wildlife Area

Tree Cutting: Forester Mackey counted rings and aged a cutting from a western large stump on the Rock Creek Unit. The cutting will be used as part of a display in the Oak Creek Visitor's Center. The tree was aged to about a 1502 origin and was harvested in 2003. The tree has fire scars regularly occurring until about 1900, when fire suppression began, and has no fire scars for its last hundred years.



Cutting from a western larch stump that was aged and all fire scars identified for a display in the Oak Creek Visitor's Center

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser met with District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra and District 8 Wildlife Biologist Jeff Bernatowicz to discuss strategic planning of wetland management for the Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area, implementation of the wetland management plan, and the role of the newly acquired Marsh Master to successfully manage wetlands on the wildlife area and benefit wetland habitats in eastern Washington.

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawks: District Biologist Fidorra began to wrap up occupancy surveys for ferruginous hawks and coordinated volunteers. The second round of occupancy surveys was completed, but a fair amount of data and volunteer management remains. Fidorra will be organizing productivity surveys of active territories beginning in June.

Bat Carcass: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a dead bat from a citizen in Pasco. The carcass was stored and frozen for shipment to the National Wildlife Health Center for White-Nose Syndrome testing.

2016 Bat Study: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed sites and contacted landowners for the 2016 Bat Study in Districts 4 and 5. Fidorra placed acoustic bat detectors at three sites and coordinated

with Biologist Rowan to relocate a detector near the Ephrata office. Fidorra plans to place detectors at eight sites each month this summer.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: District Biologist Fidorra and Biologist Bernatowicz met with Wildlife Area Manager Buser to discuss wetland management plans for the Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area. Efforts to increase open water and shore access to wetlands with the newly acquired March Master amphibious vehicle will begin after the bird nesting season ends in July. Staff members will work to develop protocols to assess the success of actions to achieve wildlife goals. Hunter use, harvest, and waterfowl brood and nesting surveys were discussed. Both biologists were pleased with Buser's plans to develop management goals and actions for individual wetlands and plan to assist in tracking and reviewing management efforts annually.

Bear Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with Enforcement, which had placed a culvert trap in response to several bear complaints in the Prosser area. Fidorra worked with WDFW carnivore staff members to prepare supplies and discuss relocation options should the animal be captured. The trapping attempts over the weekend were not successful, but will continue if complaints and sightings in the area continue.

Ferruginous Hawk: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman did a final ferruginous hawk survey in Yakima County. Stutzman revisited a previously surveyed site because apparent nest repairs were observed during the last survey period.

SAFE: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner to discuss SAFE. Stutzman and the landowner spent time walking his old CRP and discussing what a SAFE plan would require of him.

Webinar Training: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman listened in on a webinar training provided by the USFWS on various conservation programs associated with section 10 of the Endangered Species Act.

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to a roadkill radio-collared deer. Former WDFW employee Pat Gavin was at the scene and collected the head and leg. The deer had twin fawns. To date, almost all does where pregnancy status can be determined have had twin fawns. Annual survival for the biological year is now at 67 percent.

Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Conference: Biologist Bernatowicz attended and presented a paper on culling efforts in the Yakima River Canyon and Tieton. The conference was heavily weighted toward pneumonia in bighorn sheep. The case for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (MOVI) being the major cause of pneumonia is very strong. DNA strain typing has shown that MOVI strains originating from domestic sheep and goats are different and do not cross. Unfortunately, bighorn sheep surviving an outbreak from one strain do not have resistance to other strains, and there are many. At this time, there aren't any good management options once a herd is infected.

Wetlands Management: Biologist Bernatowicz met with Biologist Fidorra and Wildlife Area Manager Buser to discuss wetlands management and the use of the Marsh Master. Manager

Buser has proposed annual wetlands management plans so everyone is aware of objectives. Documenting pairs/broods was discussed. Protocols will be developed with Specialist Wilson.

District 8 Aerial Surveys: Biologist Moore finished cataloging all of waypoint and track data collected during our winter aerial surveys.

Western Gray Squirrel Surveys: Biologist Moore reviewed Biologist Vander Haegen's updated protocols and performed an initial transect site evaluation in GIS. This season's transects will be out by the end of the month.

Elk Herding: Biologist Moore assisted Conflict Specialist Wetzel with herding elk outside the L.T. Murray fence.

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias drove the 1302 road system posting boundary signs in the checkerboard ownership. Berry and Farias installed a kiosk at the southwestern boundary of the wildlife area where the 1302 road enters from the DNR Ahtanum green dot system.

New kiosk and map installed in the southwestern boundary of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician 2s Hill and Leuck put up a reader board kiosk at Tamarack Springs and a road management sign along the North Fork Manastash. These will hopefully make the public more aware that they are passing through WDFW lands and to abide by the rules.

Natural Resource Technician 2 Leuck working on the reader board at Tamarack Springs

Tree Removal: Technicians Hill and Leuck removed a large tree that had fallen over the North Fork Manastash road near the restored cabin.

Tree across North Fork Manastash Road near the cabin

Tree after being bucked and cleared from the road

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

Wildlife Management

DPCA: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent the majority of the week working the bugs out of the new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) used to document damage abatement measures and damage permit issuance. Multiple DPCAs and associated damage permits were developed and issued to landowners in the Corral Canyon Elk Area (3721). These agreements will eventually be incorporated in the Novatus system.

Trail Camera Deployment: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand surveyed several locations along Hanford's southern boarder for potential trail camera deployment. These cameras assist with monitoring elk activity and directing hazing efforts.

Nuisance Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a report from a homeowner in Prosser concerning a nuisance bear that had knocked over his garbage can. Benton County Sheriff and WDFW Enforcement are currently working on the issue.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman, Wenas Manager Confer Morris, Regional Program Manager McCorquodale, and Lands Division Manager Sprague met to discuss the agenda and site visits for the fall Lands Division School in Yakima. Options for stops on Oak Creek and the Wenas Wildlife Areas were set up. Huffman will provide a draft agenda for the Oak Creek portion.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Jeremy O'Haver-Adams started this week as a Natural Resource Worker 2 on the Colockum for the summer. Colockum staff members completed his hiring paperwork and sent it on to HR.

Fence Maintenance: Colockum staff members spent several days this week doing fence maintenance along the north boundary fence. Dead trees from the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Fire continue to fall and damage the fence, requiring removal and repairs. Staff members also spent a day working with an adjoining landowner on boundary fence repairs.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and State Forester Pfeifle met with representatives from A-1 Timber Consultants, a contractor recently hired to mark the Taneum and Hutchins Road timber sales. The contractor will likely start marking trees and laying out the sale boundaries next week.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn worked with Puget Sound Energy biologists on a presentation for the upcoming Avian Interactions with Power Lines Workshop. The presentation will focus on the collaborative efforts of WDFW and PSE to monitor and reduce swan power line strikes across western Washington.

Break Free from Fossil Fuels: Biologist DeBruyn monitored wildlife near protest and law enforcement activities around two oil refineries at March Point in Skagit County where activists were advocating for a transition away from fossil fuels. Demonstrations were well controlled. Prior education efforts payed off as activities of protesters were kept away from sensitive wildlife areas, such as a heron rookery and bald

eagle nests. Media outlets seemed to have abided by earlier promises to keep aircraft out of the airspace around the heron areas. The herons and eagles appeared oblivious to protesters, police, and media, all of whom seemed to be present in about equal numbers.

March Point herons "breaking free"

Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Symposium: Biologist Milner attended the symposium in Moscow, Idaho. Milner chaired a session and enjoyed meeting many people dedicated to conservation of wild sheep and goats. The symposium was well supported by a number of generous sponsors and the presenters provided a host of information ranging from habitat use to disease research.

Wolf Management: Biologists DeBruyn and Yarborough set up some trail cameras in an area northeast of Concrete where loggers had reported seeing three large canids.

Prohibited Wildlife Management – Invasive Species: Districts 12 and 13 continued efforts for invasive species monitoring. Efforts will now switch gears to expand reconnaissance, gain landowner permission, and develop trapping techniques. District 12 is in conversation with property owners to gain access and in touch with AIS regarding communication and needs.

The African clawed frog is one of the invasive aquatic species found in King and Snohomish counties

Protected Wildlife Management – White Nose Syndrome: District 12 is engaging in outreach to formal entities and local NGOs. District 12 participated in ongoing internal 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.

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, including caving, climbing, and canyoneering. Report sick bats online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/

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

Protected Wildlife Management – Assistance to Habitat Regarding Priority Habitats and Species Non-jurisdictional Management Consultation in District 12: Biologist Anderson assisted area habitat biologists, when requested, to provide for area 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/

Anderson also documented a new heron colony in Seattle in the Lake City area.

New heron colony in Lake City – nest with ~5 week old chicks in it – Photo by C. Anderson

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project Grant Writing: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with the Stillaguamish Watershed Lead Entity Coordinator to go over information needed about Stillaguamish River salmon to answer questions in a Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Program grant. After the meeting, Brokaw used the information to draft answers to the questions and submitted them for review. Brokaw also began preparing materials for a pre-application to submit to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP).

Leque Island Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review: In response to a request by WDFW and Leque Island grant reviewers, DNR provided a map that shows boundary lines between WDFW property on Leque Island and DNR-owned aquatic lands. This map will be useful to evaluate if WDFW will need a permit from DNR for the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project.

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 plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. Fifty-five acres of barley will be planted this year, and is scheduled to

be planted next week. The five acres of faba beans and sunflower seeds planted two weeks ago have sprouted, and are now actively growing.

The five acres of faba (not fava) beans and sunflower seeds planted two weeks ago have sprouted, and are now actively growing on the Lake Terrell Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area

Five barn owl chicks have hatched out in a nesting box on the Whatcom Wildlife Area

Field Prep: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss field preparations and planting plans at the Stillwater and Cherry Valley units. Agricultural lease holders are also busy plowing and discing at the Crescent Lake and Ebey Island units. Each of the lessees have share-crop agreements where one third of the crops are retained for wildlife forage and cover.

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

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit Tidegate Replacement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw distributed three reports to the Swinomish Tribe, Skagit River Systems Cooperative, and NOAA Fisheries in preparation for a meeting to discuss permitting of a project to replace a failing tide gate on the Island Unit. The reports summarize Chinook salmon use in the area and evaluate feasibility of different design options.

Nooksack River Dike Top Trail Mowing: Manager Kessler mowed the dike top trail along the Nooksack River on the Nooksack Unit. The grass was very tall and the growth is very early this year. He also mowed around the Parking Areas on the north and south of the unit.

Intalco Archery Course Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed around the archery course on the Intalco Unit. The archery course which is being managed by the Custer

Sportsmen's Club has been very busy this spring. A 3D Shooting Tournament is scheduled for this July.

Monthly Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park Meeting: Manager Kessler attended the monthly meeting of the nonprofit group the Friends of Tennant Lake and Hovander Park.

Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto completed gate checks on the Monroe and North Skagit spring bear hunt units. Otto found minimal issues with gates and locks and was able to correct any issues onsite. While in the field, Otto made contact with multiple DNR staff members, timber company personnel, and a permit bear hunter. Otto cleared multiple trees blocking roads.

Wildlife Viewing: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed wildlife viewing and diversity contracts. Biologist Wingard coordinated with Olympia staff members on the possibility of including wildlife viewing and diversity sites in the Reservation system. These sites provide opportunities for the public to view wildlife on private lands. Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto opened the Swan Road wildlife viewing and diversity site. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell contacted and coordinated with the Skagit Land Trust (SLT) Executive Director on coordinating wildlife future viewing opportunities. Private Land Access Program staff members will meet with SLT on May 31 to share ideas and talk about possible coordination efforts.

Private Land Access Program staff members will meet with the Skagit Land Trust to share ideas about possible coordinated wildlife viewing efforts

Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement Projects: Natural Resource Technician Otto continued herbicide application on migratory bird enhancement forage sites in Skagit and Whatcom counties in preparation for barley planting. The excellent weather allowed Otto to spray six and a half acres. Private Lands Biologist Wingard toured some of the areas Otto sprayed recently to determine effectiveness.

A portable water tank greatly increased efficiency of weekly spraying operations

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call from a landowner in Acme who was mowing a grass field and discovered approximately 40 elk bedded in the field. The landowner was inquiring what his options were to move the elk off the property. The landowner was advised of several hazing techniques to deploy.

Elk Fencing: Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal continued work on an 80 acre elk exclusionary fencing project in Birdsview. The project is progressing well and should be completed in the next two weeks.

Wildlife Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell contacted the Washington Cattleman's Association and Western Washington Agricultural Association executives to discuss regional wildlife conflict matters and coordinate on any concerning issues. In conclusion of these discussions, executives stated that they were pleased with communication and coordination strategies moving forward and advised that they wish to be involved in future dialogue involving their associated interests.

Coyote Depredation: Witman received a call from a cattle producer who has lost several calves to coyote depredation. The landowner was put in contact with a local wildlife control operator to address the situation. Witman and Cogdal began implementing materials at the Hamilton Cemetery in Skagit County to mitigate elk presence within the cemetery.

Abandoned Ducklings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received several calls regarding abandoned ducklings. All of the situations resolved themselves when the mother ducks returned. Witman advised the callers that there are several things homeowners can do when encountering or observing ducklings by themselves. Some suggestions that he provided included:

1. Keep pets inside your residence or property leashed when you observe ducklings on your property.
2. Don't handle the ducklings.
3. Keep all crawl spaces and any drain openings covered so ducklings do not become stuck or trapped.

Waterfowl Data: Biologist Yarborough provided historic waterfowl census information for Whatcom and Skagit counties to biologists from the Lummi Nation.

Wildlife Areas

Happy girl at Wiley Slough Restoration project on Skagit Wildlife Area

Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton attended a Fir Island Farm construction meeting and the pre-activity meeting for the water quality monitoring for in water work such as channel connections, dike removal, and estuarine berm construction. Manager Rotton continued to contact local contractors and restoration specialists regarding the native seeding of the marsh.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove continued field-work on the Island Unit, preparing areas for barley and millet. Cosgrove mowed areas at the Headquarters Unit with the riding mower.

Leque Island Unit: Manager Rotton is assisting Ducks Unlimited with finding a contractor to assist with mowing of dike access for survey purposes.

Samish Unit: Meis mowed locations throughout the unit, targeting areas with high concentrations of noxious weeds. Ground preparations are near complete and plantings are scheduled to be completed this week. Meis is coordinating the logistics for the planting of barley, fava beans, and corn with sharecrop farms, vendors, and contractors.

Manager Rotton met with Ducks Unlimited Engineer Steve Liske and Waterfowl Program Manager Don Kraege to discuss some post-project modifications to the water control structures and a few locations to extend the new water control berms and bring the existing berm up to the six elevation.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with a local excavating company and local volunteer to receive truckloads of donated wood chips. The wood chips are used to build up the road and trail network at the unit. The arrangement saves the excavating company the cost of disposing the chips and provides the unit with suitable material for interior access roads at no cost.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard began drafting high priority waterfowl hunting access contracts for the upcoming waterfowl season. Private Land Access Program staff members try to obtain signatures at high priority locations early in the year to avoid losing a site to private hunting clubs. Natural Resource Technician Otto dismantled waterfowl hunt signs at the La Conner office and stored them for the offseason.

Whidbey Island Diversity and Wildlife Viewing Site: Natural Resource Technician Otto conducted trail maintenance on the Whidbey Island Diversity and Wildlife Viewing site near Langley. The trail has been experiencing heavy use this past month, with many people signing in at the kiosk. Otto replaced sign-in sheets and conducted vegetation control.

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

Wildlife Management

Records Retention: Biologist Yarborough continued to go through historical files related to District 14. The goal is to have all historical data in electronic format in a centralized location for easier access.

General Wildlife Monitoring Needs: Biologist Anderson is working on data compilation needs. New heron colonies reported, new eagle nests, bat roosts, working on outreach to area partners to provide for assistance in recreation, and community engagement to find bat roosts – what to do with dead/dying bats, and training when possible. Anderson attended the Bats Northwest meeting, enlisted more volunteers, and gave direction to have them put our websites on their website, as well as handing out our informational handouts on bats and white nose syndrome – reporting dead/dying bats and roosts.

Training: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended a day-long Noxious Weed Control Recertification Seminar provided by King County Weed Control staff members. The training focused on the revised King County Noxious Weed list, WDFW rules for aquatic weed removal, and knotweed control.

Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended training in Lacey. The eight hour training was useful. Feedback was provided to Olympia staff members on the applicability of the teachings, who should be taking the class, and the overall satisfaction of the course.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Project: District Biologist Anderson conducted a follow-up visit to the newly acquired western pond turtle habitat in the Columbia River Gorge. The purpose of the site visit was to evaluate a water control structure critical to maintaining two ponds used by western pond turtles. A local consulting engineer firm was onsite to offer us alternatives for a long term solution to a secure water source for recovery of this species. In addition, we visited adjacent USFS property where their resource crew hand-mowed an area to improve western pond turtle nesting habitat. We appreciate USFS in our cooperative efforts to manage habitat for the western pond turtle in the gorge.

Water control structure evaluation

Western pond turtle nesting habitat enhancement

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Biologists Bergh, Butler, and WSU veterinary student Iredale conducted western pond turtle trapping at the Sondino site this week. Eight hatchling turtles (just left the nest and entered the ponds this spring) were captured this week and sent to the Oregon Zoo. There they will grow to a larger size that will help them escape predation when we release them back into the ponds. Thirteen young turtles (< 7 years) that were captured were taken to WSU for bone density scans as well as CT scans. In addition, eight adult turtles (> 7 years) were taken by Veterinarian Haman and Biologist Hallock to the VCA Animal Hospital for CT scans. Samples for microbiome and fungal etiology studies were also collected from these turtles. All these tests and samples are part of the effort to learn more about Undefined Shell Disease (USD) which affects western pond turtles in Washington.

Adult western pond turtle CT scanned for Undefined Shell Disease (USD)

Western Gray Squirrel Surveys: Biologists Bergh and Anderson, Technician Petrie, and Volunteer Flick attended training at the Klickitat Wildlife Area by Research Scientist Vanderhaegen on this summer's western gray squirrel hair tube surveys. The protocol was discussed in detail, example hair tubes were set-up, and squirrel hair identification was covered. Placement of survey transects will begin next week and the project will continue through September.

Fisher Reintroduction – Fisher Den Search: Biologists Holman, Stephens, and Wainwright (USFS) attempted to locate a female fisher on the east side of Mount St. Helens who was released several months ago near Cispus as part of the Washington Cascades Fisher Reintroduction Project. The fisher was suspected to be denning because of her concentrated locations over the past month during monitoring flights. A couple of routes were tried, but biologists were unable to get close to her due to snowy roads and a creek too swift and deep to cross. The purpose of this effort was to set up trail cameras near potential den sites to confirm that reproduction has taken place. Information about fishers in Washington, including updates on the Cascade Mountain Range Fisher Reintroduction Project, can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/fisher/

Black-tailed Deer Ecology Study: Biologists Stephens and Holman collared two fawns after receiving a notification that the VIT (vaginal implant transmitter) had been expelled on a collared doe. Both fawns were males and their survival will continue to be monitored via the doe's GPS collar. Fawn season is officially upon us and we would like to remind the public that it is natural for the does to leave their fawns alone for several hours at a time while foraging. If you find a fawn alone, **do not pick it up**. Give the fawn space and allow time for the doe to return. Monitor it until you are certain it has been abandoned and then attempt to find a rehab center before you decide to rescue it. Rehab space is limited for fawns.

Deer fawn – Westside Research Project

Sandhill Crane Nest Surveys: Biologist Anderson conducted a Sandhill crane nest survey located on DNR land in the Klickitat River drainage. An adult crane was located incubating eggs on a nest hidden in deep grass on the lower end of the wet meadow. Cranes failed to nest at this site in 2015 due to the extreme drought. This year, water levels are back to normal and 2016 should be a more successful breeding season.

Sandhill crane on nest

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Spears Unit Mill Foundation Fill and Grade Project: The fill and grade project at the old Spears mill site continues as the Department of Transportation, Lewis County Public Works, and City of Morton provide clean fill material from local projects such as ditch cleaning and slide debris removal. Approximately 7,000 yards have been delivered of the 15,000 yards permitted by the county under a fill and grade permit. The area where the disposal occurs consists of upland ground on previously disturbed soils, and the soils are heavily compacted from years of equipment use and mill operations. The fill material is also being used to fill in hazardous interiors of the old mill foundations and provides a suitable surface for habitat plantings.

Spears fill and grade project before and after

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Soda Springs Unit Grazing Permit: Cattle were turned out on the grazing permit area on the Soda Springs Unit on May 12. A sufficient number of riders, working dogs, and police escort vehicles helped the movement of livestock go smoothly. This grazing permit has been in place since 1982, with renewals every six years. Cattle will be on this part of the Soda Springs Unit until June 15, and will be moved to summer pasture on private property.

Soda Springs grazing permit

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

Access

Martin Access – Cowlitz County: A large amount of trash was dumped in the north parking lot of the Martin Access was picked and hauled by WDFW staff. Over 200 pounds was removed including a reclining chair and old TV.

Martin access clean up

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

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Cowlitz Wildlife Area Hunter Education Class: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members Vanderlip and Morris, along with one local volunteer, conducted a 4.5 hour hunter education online evaluation class at the wildlife area office. This class was offered to nine students who have completed the online class, but have not yet passed the skills evaluation process conducted by a hunter education instructor. This step is required before they can purchase a hunting license in the state of Washington. The material from the student manual was reviewed and each student completed a 20 question test and demonstrated they could safely handle and operate a firearm in a variety of situations. All students passed the course.

Cultural Resource Training: Assistant Manager Richard Vanderlip attended the four day cultural resource training class held in Ellensburg at Central Washington University. The multi-agency class focused on the teaching of laws, rules, and policies applicable to cultural resources and how to use them in the construction of projects on state and federal lands. There were a variety of speakers who explained the difference between historical and pre-historical artifacts, what are cultural resources, why they are important, and the tribal perspective. The students visited an archaeological site as well as a couple of historical homesteads. There were case studies discussed to give real world examples of how the process works and to illustrate how the landscape needs to be considered when determining whether a project is likely to have a possible adverse effect on a resource site.

Wildlife Conflict

Wolf Outreach: Conflict Specialists Peterson and Conklin, along with Biologist Meyer and other statewide department staff members, attended the monthly Klickitat Cattlemen's Association meeting to share information related to wolves and cougars with the local producers. Producers in Klickitat County are already committing to proactive measures that will protect their livestock from predators.

District 9 Wildlife Conflict

Trail Cameras: Conflict Specialist Heilhecker and Peterson checked trial cameras in a known wolf territory around Okanogan County. A trail camera captured images of wolves belonging to a known pack in that part of north central Washington. In addition, the camera captured images of coyotes, bobcats, and deer.

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Conflict Specialist Conklin continues to receive calls regarding a bear getting into beehives and garbage in the Kalama area. She has given advice to all of the reporting parties and will do outreach next week in the area. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin verified bear damage on industrial timberlands in Lewis County.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

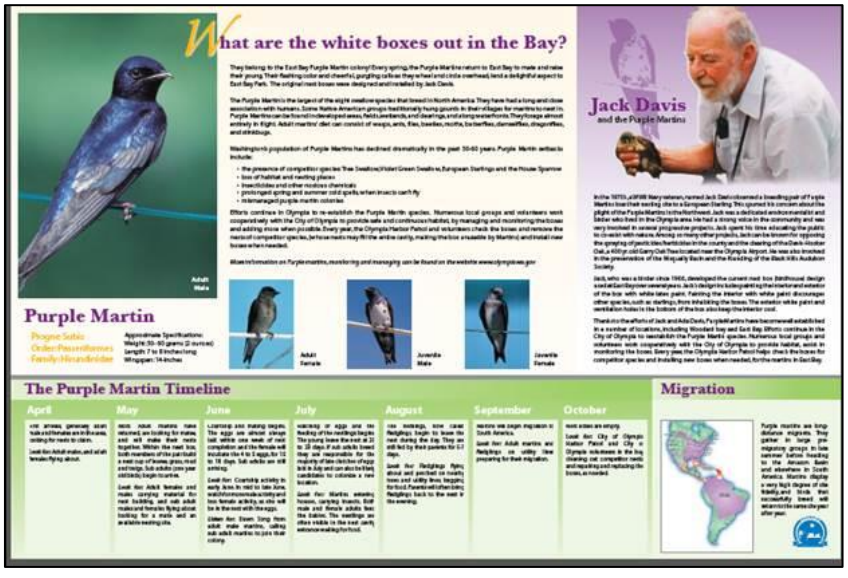
Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Tirhi and newly hired Biologist Holcomb prepared for the 2016 pond turtle monitoring season (May 16-July 1), including preparing data forms, organizing all volunteer/staff monitoring equipment, and finalizing the staff/volunteer monitoring schedule. Tirhi also spent time training Holcomb on how the field monitoring is conducted. Holcomb spent time pulling and anchoring the last of the log booms used for basking in one of the turtle ponds, mowing the bottom of the nesting hill of blackberries and removing cut materials, clearing the walking trails around the ponds for safety and adding new walking boards where needed, and programming the 2016 female transmitter frequencies into the receiver for monitoring. Twenty-six females have transmitters this season and will be monitored for nesting.

Female state endangered western pond turtle with transmitter, 2010 (newer transmitters are much smaller than seen here)

Common Loon: Biologist Tirhi conducted a second common loon (Gavia immer) survey at Alder Lake, Pierce County. Tirhi revisited an inlet on the lake where one adult loon had consistently been seen over several visits this year and last with the intent of kayaking the inlet for closer and longer monitoring of the adult and its movement to shore (nest?). Unfortunately, on arrival the gate to the launch was locked, which never happened before, and Tirhi had to monitor from the shore with scope. No loons were present during the three hour survey from the observation point. Tirhi has requested a key from the Nisqually River Project in order to get behind the gate for future surveys. Additionally, Biologists Tirhi and Michaelis plan to survey the entire lake in June to search for adults with juveniles (as confirmation of breeding). Tirhi was recently told that significant water fluctuations may be occurring at the lake due to water being released from the reservoir, which could explain why adults are often seen (attracted?) at this lake but are possibly unable to have a successful nesting season. If correct, the installation of a floating nesting platform may be ideal for this site, and Tirhi has an inlet in mind that might be ideal.

Purple Martin Volunteer Monitoring: Biologist Tirhi provided the Black Hills Audubon with various purple martin colony monitoring data forms and training materials for the Audubon chapter to begin monitoring several martin colonies in Thurston County. Chapter members, along with volunteers from Boston Harbor marina, recently reinstalled several new martin boxes and trained several volunteers for annual monitoring and reporting. A newly created martin information sign will be installed at the marina during a reception on May 18 at 7:00 p.m., which Tirhi hopes to attend.



Example of sign installed at East Bay Harbor, Olympia, Thurston County

Snowy Plover: Strong northwest winds (in excess of 30 mph) over Mother's Day weekend buried four nests at various stages of incubation progression at Midway Beach. Three nests at Midway and Graveyard have hatched so far, while the fate of one nest remains

undetermined at this time. More nests are being discovered, likely in response to the demise of buried nests. Biologist Michaelis assisted with plover nest surveying at Midway.

One streaked horned lark nest, in the building stage, was also discovered – something that has not been noted for several seasons at Midway Beach.

2016 Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit Season Totals				
# Nests Discovered	*# Nests Active*	*# Nests Hatched*	*# Nests Failed*	*# Nests w/ Unknown Fate*
24	14	3	6	1

Technician Raby conducted nest searching, nest checks, egg floatation, and brood searching this week at Leadbetter. Raby was joined by Refuge Biologist Ritchie to conduct nest checks for two days.

2016 Leadbetter Season Totals				
# Nests Discovered	*# Nests Active*	*# Nests Hatched*	*# Nests Failed*	*# Nests w/ Unknown Fate*
16	11	2	3	0

Biologist Novack participated in the snowy plover range-wide predator action call. An update was provided on snowy plover nesting and predator control activities.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys at Southern Extant Site West of the Elwha: Biologist McMillan conducted Taylor's checkerspot surveys at the southern extant site west of the Elwha. She conducted the Parallel and Jenny Route surveys this week.

Parallel off road route, with scotch broom patches evident

Biologist Ament conducted a total of two surveys at the southern extant site west of the Elwha last week.

May 10, 2016: Biologist Ament conducted a checkerspot survey at a known site located west of Port Angeles on May 10, 2016. This route is located on the western portion of the site. The route was established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were excellent for the survey. There was full sun and no clouds for the entire survey. The temperature ranged from 64.1 – 72.4 degrees, with very minimal wind. A total of 128 checkerspots were observed during the survey. The numbers have started to decrease along this route.

May 11, 2016: Biologist Ament conducted a Taylor's checkerspot survey on May 11 on an existing road route that has several landing areas. The route was established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were excellent for the survey. There was full sunshine and shadows present for the entire survey. The temperature ranged from 61.7 – 70.7 degrees and there were very minimal winds during the survey. A total of 55 checkerspots were observed during the survey. A total of 50 checkerspots were counted on this route on May 1.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys at Northern Extant Site west of the Elwha: Biologist Ament conducted a tandem survey with Habitat Biologist Bell on May 12. Survey conditions were excellent, with no clouds and temperatures over 70 degrees. Upper and lower survey routes have been established at this site for many years. Last season, 25 meter segments were established and flagged along both routes. Many checkerspots were observed nectaring on Oregon sunshine flowers. Biologist Ament surveyed the upper route and recorded a total of 77 checkerspots. Biologist Bell counted a total of 32 checkerspots for the lower route and eastern balds. The total checkerspots for the survey were 109. The count for this survey on May 6 was 281, so the numbers are dropping significantly at this site. It was noted at several checkerspot sites that some of the host plants, including *Plantago lanceolate* and *Castilleja hispida*, were already starting to shrivel and dry out due to the period of warm and sunny weather.

Plantago lanceolata starting to dry out

Unique bees observed on survey

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Searching: Biologist McMillan spent two days searching for checkerspots. One area that was searched was the old Lake Mills lakebed, including the balds along Boulder Creek. This search was triggered by a lead from someone who observed checkerspots last year. No checkerspots were observed and the balds explored did not appear very suitable, being almost entirely vertical. The other area searched was Green Hill (USFS) on the eastern Olympic Peninsula, a grassy mossy bald that had very few checkerspot host plants.

Boulder Creek balds along old Lake Mills lakebed. Park Service staff member Shea McDonald reviewing Pojar for plant identification.

Lake Mills Lakebed - search for Taylor's checkerspots and suitable habitat

Olympic National Park: On May 13, 2016, Biologist Ament conducted an investigation in Olympic National Park after Biologist McMillan received a report of Taylor's checkerspot butterflies using a bald area in the Elwha Valley. Park staff members requested that no butterflies be collected so the goal was to try and get good photographs to determine if the checkerspots observed were indeed *Euphydryas editha taylori.* Biologist Ament was able to locate the bald area and observed a total of three checkerspot butterflies at the site. She was able to take several photos that were provided to Biologist Potter. The photos were forwarded to noted Lepidoptera taxonomist Jonathan Pelham and he reported that the butterflies photographed were species *editha*. Apparently, two *editha* subspecies occur in this landscape. To identify which occurs at this specific bald area, specimens will actually need to be collected and assessed by taxonomic experts. Olympia staff members will be initiating discussions with park staff members to outline a plan to assess and monitor this newly documented site next year.

Photos of the checkerspot butterflies observed in Olympic National Park

View from the bald where checkerspot butterflies were observed in the Elwha Valley

Wildlife Areas

Mowing and Tilling: The Olympic crew mowed and began tilling areas that had been previously sprayed for smartweed production at Davis Creek Wildlife Area. The crew's efforts also included mowing of the parking lot and around the metal building on the north end of the property, as well as the cutting and spraying of scotch broom plants.

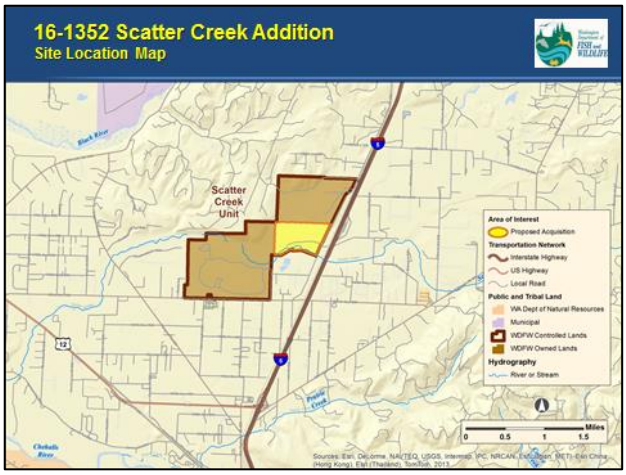
The Olympic crew also mowed areas that had been sprayed at the Chehalis Wildlife Area, and will be tilled up for smartweed production too.

Denny VanBlaricom began disking the Unit 4B fields in the Wynoochee Mitigation. With the ground having been previously sprayed and brushed it's now time to start the replanting stage of the project. It will ultimately provide about 45 acres of fresh winter forage for the elk populations in the area.

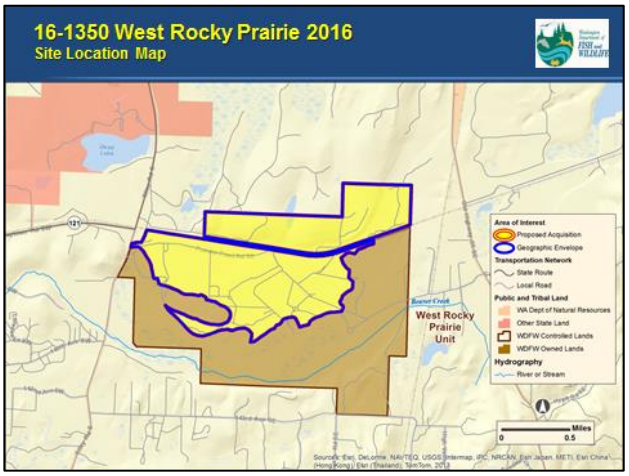
GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

WWRP Presentations: Biologist Tirhi spent considerable time preparing presentations for two land acquisition projects she has applied for in the 2016 Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The practice presentations will take place later in the month. The two projects are an acquisition of 745 acres of prairie/oak bordering our West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area and 180 acres of prairie bordering our Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. Both are in Thurston County.



WWRP Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Addition Acquisition 2016



WWRP West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area Addition Acquisition 2016

Matheny Habitat Project: Eyes in the Woods held another work party improving wildlife habitat on USFS lands in the Matheny GMU. While a smaller turnout than expected (eight Saturday and nine Sunday), they still managed to improve conditions on several acres. Biologist Harris spent part of the weekend with them at the work location and at the WDFW Clearwater Cabin.

Some emergency repairs needed to be made to keep the volunteers who placed their cots on the back deck dry. Our trusty blue tarp can no longer be called waterproof. A plan is in place to schedule a work party to address some of the needed maintenance items at the cabin.

With one volunteer staying at the Clearwater cabin to monitor radio in case of an emergency, the others went out to the location. The volunteers follow USFS call in/ call out policy. A call is made when work is started, at the start of lunch, at the end of lunch, and when they are done for the day. The volunteer monitoring radio has the USFS-provided emergency plan to follow in case of an emergency. The volunteers have several locations they are working on. Some they avoid during the spring because of proximity to marbled murrelet and spotted owl nesting habitat. The stand they were working in was interesting. While it had a few game trails through it, there was very little elk sign within much of it because of the slash. The edges had good amount of elk sign. Volunteers cleared new travel corridors and piled slash. Soon there likely will be elk sign in the newly opened habitat. It really is amazing to see how fast a crew moves through an area. What looks like a day's work only takes the crew an hour or so before they move on to the next.

Volunteers conducting safety and work plan meeting prior to starting for the day. Note: Former WDFW Regional Program Manager Jack Smith, now WDFW Volunteer Jack Smith, is instructing on where they will be working in relation to nesting restriction areas.

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

Private Lands/Access

Rumer Mill: Recently information has been spreading about Rayonier Timberlands being purchased. Here is what we currently know. An unknown buyer has reportedly purchased a good portion of Rayonier's holdings south of Aberdeen. It is currently unknown exactly how much and in what GMUs.

Wildlife Conflict

Ocean Shores Bear: Natural Resource Technician Leite removed the bear trap from Ocean Shores. Biologist Harris was having difficulties communicating with the landowner who said they would watch the trap. Additionally there had been no reports for a week, leading him to think the bear had moved on. The day after the trap was moved, three new reports came in. This bear is all over the place and really not presenting a pattern, so setting a trap is almost moot because it moves from area to area at random. Biologist Harris thinks that this bear may be capitalizing on the numerous properties that feed deer. There are a plethora of garbage cans and only a few get the bear's attention. Another report came in of the bear running across the golf course over the weekend.

Bear Timber Damage: Natural Resource Technician Leite checked bear damage in Lewis, Grays Harbor, and Clallam counties. He also made a trip to a small forest landowner's property to help monitor bear damage. He went into an area that is difficult for the landowner to access and found one recently damaged tree.

A Master Hunter reported harvesting a bear on a small forest landowner's property. While using Master Hunters and a very small amount of bait is somewhat contentious, it so far appears to be effective. Bears have been harvested on two small forest landowner properties. Both properties have stands that are prime age for peeling and have a history of damage. So far no damage has been found this year!

Long Beach Cranberries: Once again the elk are helping themselves to cranberries in the center of the peninsula. Biologist Harris met with the producer to discuss a DPCA and to look at the potential for using nonlethal measures. The producer has been hazing the elk and, as expected, the elk have figured out he is no threat. It's not feasible to use fladry, so a permit may be issued. This is an area where Region 6 staff members have determined that we really do not want a growing population establishing itself.

Grayland Cranberries: The remote camera system is starting to get more pictures of deer indicating the buds are getting tastier. However, the cameras also took pictures of some local hooligans who found the camera and decided to test it out. From dancing, using sticks for antlers, and other silliness they managed to reduce the charge on the recently replaced batteries. Okay, we have to admit it was funny. At least it was not elk. Normally when we get a dozen or more pictures coming in continuously through email, it means bad things are happening in the cranberries. The cameras have been reset to come on a little later, hopefully past the hooligans' bed time.

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

Other

Hiring: Biologist Tirhi hired and trained seasonal employee Chris Holcomb to assist in the district through July. Chris has been a valuable seasonal employee on various WDFW projects across the state over the recent years and, prior to that, he volunteered on a number of projects. Chris immediately was put to various tasks upon hire, including preparing for the western pond turtle monitoring season. Welcome aboard, Chris!