

Wildlife Program

Week of October 3 – October 9, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Profanity Peak Wolf Pack: Lethal removal activities continued throughout the week in District 1. WDFW staff members coordinated with the Ferry County Sheriff's Department, range riders, and producers all week.

Northeast Washington Depredation Investigations: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Sergeant Taylor investigated an injured cow report east of Colville. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent the week on depredation investigation reports. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted two producers east of Colville regarding wolf issues.

Contract Range Rider Meetings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with WDFW contract range riders for September invoices and to discuss logs. Bennett will be reviewing this program to identify opportunities for improvements.

Stevens County Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement Producer Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with two livestock producers to discuss recent depredations, range riding efforts, and next steps. Bennett also collected invoices. Additional follow-up is needed.

Ferry County Depredation

Investigation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, WDFW Officer Konkle, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and Wolf Biologist Roussin investigated a Hereford calf with injuries. After examining the calf in a squeeze shoot, it was determined to be a confirmed wolf depredation injury. Additional follow-up is ongoing.

An injured calf discovered in Ferry County by a range rider



Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on two conference calls regarding three different wolf packs in District 1.

Wolf Sightings: Biologist Earl took several reports of wolf sightings in Asotin County. Earl entered the sightings on WDFW's wolf sighting reporting webpage.

Wolf Sightings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received the following reports from hunters this week:

- Two black wolves observed on the Griffin Peak head of North Touchet River. No collars.
- Two black wolves observed on Indian Peak trail in Wenaha. No collars.
- Four wolves observed feeding on a dead deer behind Edmonson Springs and the Skyline Road.
- One black wolf seen by four separate hunters on Canright Road southeast of Waitsburg.
- Two black wolves observed in producer's cattle on Ekler Mountain and Cougar Canyon. No collars.
- Three wolves observed on the Mount Misery trail feeding on a dead elk. No collars.
- Two wolves observed at the head of Lewis Gulch/Patit Road chasing deer. No collars.
- OR-38 and another wolf were observed on Cahill Mountain south of Dayton "walking through a producer's herd of cattle."

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Wolf Management: Specialist Heilhecker talked to a producer regarding range riding, wolf locations, and livestock grazing. The majority of livestock have been moved off the public allotments and back to private land.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Butterfly Conservation Conversation with KCTS 9: Biologist Ann Potter talked with Ken Christensen, a reporter from Seattle public television (KCTS 9), about butterfly research and conservation projects across Washington. Reporter Christensen was especially interested in known, studied, or theoretically likely effects to butterflies from climate change. Potter summarized the results of many published studies assessing climate change impacts to butterflies, and provided information on butterfly conservation-oriented projects ongoing in our state for the island marble, Taylor's checkerspot, monarch, and additional imperiled native grassland butterflies. Potter followed-up via email with publication titles and contact information for project leads.

Western Pond Turtle Story on King 5: Fish and Wildlife Veterinarian Katie Haman and Biologist Lisa Hallock were interviewed by Alison Morrow for a story about western pond turtle shell disease. Assistant District Biologist Emily Butler also helped. The link to the story has been provided for further details: <http://www.king5.com/tech/science/environment/turtle-shell-disease-scans-show-alarming-lesions/330253351>.

South Puget Sound Prairie Landscape Conservation: Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson and Restoration Ecologist David Hays participated in an internal Department of Fish & Wildlife strategy session on South Puget Sound land acquisition for potential proposed projects with regional and real estate staff members. Cynthia and David also attended the Sentinel Landscape Partnership meeting, at which several collaborative landscape conservation issues were

discussed, including current strategies for land acquisition and the vision statement for the group. The following groups are developing a landscape vision/ business action plan for collective work: Thurston County, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Joint Base Lewis Mc-Chord (JBLM), several farmland and land trusts, and the Center for Natural Lands Management.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE



Bighorn Harvest: Biologist Lowe inspected and pinned the second bighorn ram harvested from the Lincoln Cliffs herd. The hunter reported having a great experience and appreciated the cooperation of landowners and residents in the area.

Hunter with Lincoln Cliffs ram

Wetland Dam Repairs: Working under an approved hydraulic permit, a contractor completed repairs to two small blown out dam faces for recently restored wetland ponds downstream of Z Lake in the Lake Creek drainage on Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area.



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

Public Contacts: Biologist Baarstad was contacted by 16 hunters seeking upland bird hunting and deer hunting opportunities throughout Districts 1 and 2.

Hunter Inquiries: Private Lands Biologist Lewis assisted nine hunters who called, emailed, or stopped into the St. John Field Office with questions regarding public access properties, reservation hunts and properties, big game muzzleloader hunting, and upland bird hunting.

Private Lands Biologist Lewis also assisted a disgruntled hunter with finding a place to hunt. The hunter had lost places to hunt due to land being enrolled into access programs. Lewis worked with an access cooperator to get the hunter placed on a property to hunt during the upcoming modern firearm deer season.



Access Signage: Private Lands Biologist Lewis spent time taking down access signs from properties no longer enrolled in the WDFW access programs. Lewis renewed signage on some properties in the Riparia/Hay area of the Snake River that were recently re-enrolled for public hunting access.

Hunt by Reservation property in GMU 142

Hunting Access Questions: Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade each spent time responding to an increase in sportsmen inquiries on hunting opportunities in Garfield, Asotin, and Columbia counties.

Hunting Access: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley spoke with nine hunters regarding questions and comments pertaining to the Hunt by Reservation system and access program. The hunters had varied criticisms regarding being able to reserve specific dates they wanted and were not successful as individuals reserving group hunts (when there were individual hunts available) and hunting by themselves.

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

Deer and Pheasant Hunters: Supervisor McCanna met with five hunters who stopped by the St. John field office inquiring about areas to hunt for the deer and pheasant openers. They also asked about populations. Adult bucks appear to be down this year, according to landowners and muzzleloader hunters, while pheasant numbers appear to be up.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project Phase 1: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass worked with Okanogan Complex Manager Dale Swedberg to communicate to the RCO grant manager the need to open the scope of the Methow project for prescribed fire activities. Luckily, grant funding is set up to support upland forest restoration activities and WDFW is cleared to interpret that for prescribed fire. This will likely lead to a need to extend the grant timeline to allow fuels generated from logging activities to cure sufficiently. Bass also worked with Lisa Nelson to clarify funding/ billing issues and finalize plans for a WDFW match fund. This included finalizing an amendment related to administrative costs and creating new MI codes to track matched costs.

Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration Project (SERP) Phase 3: Okanogan Lands Forester Bass coordinated with Justin Haug to discuss actions for the SERP commercial logging projects. The final round of commercial thinning will be done by Boise-Cascade as part of an existing contract. An amendment to include the Sinlahekin has been drafted and, once acreage is finalized, could be signed. The current issue is still waiting to hear back regarding PHS guidelines for goshawk management in one of the units. It is likely the FPA will be submitted sometime next week, with the option to remove a unit if it continues to be a concern.

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

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Hunting: Biologist Rowan discussed future changes at Crescent Bar with Habitat Biologist Verhey. Grant County PUD is renovating areas on the bar per licensing agreement, which will include adding a hiking trail to the southern end. This area is used by waterfowl hunters during winter. We recommended the PUD seek input from the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association, and potentially implement a seasonal closure of the area to non-hunters during waterfowl hunting season. Biologist Rowan assembled maps and handouts for hunters using the regulated access areas. Waterfowl hunters planning to use Winchester Regulated Access Area need to be advised there may be very little water in the cells, and they should check the WDFW website for updates on water conditions. Biologist McPherson has been bringing up water levels at TD1 in the Frenchman Hills area. McPherson has also been providing maintenance to water control structures as water levels come up in the Frenchman Regulated Access Area. Biologist McPherson installed signage and hunter registration boxes at Winchester Regulated Access, North Potholes Regulated Access, and Frenchman Regulated Access.

Wildlife Areas

Supplemental Feed Route: Assistant Manager Bechtold prepped for the arrival of a WCC crew and supervised them and agency personnel on a 30-acre planting/seeding project in which 7,000 shrubs are to be planted. Prep work included coordinating with WCC representatives and several WDFW personnel, as well as completing final site prep activities such as disking, packing, and moving equipment. Upon arrival, the crew was trained in the use of a mechanical transplanter and mulch machine by private lands staff members. The planting aspect of the project was initiated near the end of the week and will be completed by the end of the weekend. Assistant Manager Cole spent time moving and repairing equipment in preparation for fall shrub and grass planting activities scheduled in the Gloyd Seeps as part of the Supplemental Feed Route Project. An afternoon was also spent assisting with the shrub planting effort.

Access

Water Access Sites: Access Manager Harmon spread approximately 36 yards of rock alongside the heavily used Blythe Water Access site. The edges of the double 200+ foot ramp were exposed and undermined due to wave action throughout the year.





Before and after photos of the Blythe Water Access site – Photos by Josh Harmon

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

Wildlife Areas

Methow Grazing Monitoring & Oversight: Assistant Manager Troyer heard reports trickle in from the weekend that someone opened every single gate at the Riser Lake grazing lease and cows were on Highway 20. The cattleman who has rights to this lease acted immediately. This lease in particular is being aggressively contested by neighbors and members of the community. This is not the first time gates have been left open. Methow Wildlife Area staff members have also found fences cut in areas that experience high use from the cows. These acts seem to be happening more regularly and are gradually becoming increasingly malicious. Assistant Manager Troyer is diligently working with the lessee to attempt to resolve these types of issues.

Chelan Butte Recreation: Manager Fox attended the Lake Chelan Community Open Space Vision Stakeholder Meeting in Chelan. This effort is being led by the City of Chelan, Lake Chelan Trails Alliance, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, and Trust for Public Lands with the goal of creating a comprehensive community-based vision for balancing strategic protection of open space and recreation with continued local development. As expected, Chelan Butte was prominent in the discussion for new trail development.

Private Lands/Access

Othello High School Outreach: Biologist Dougherty presented to a group of students from Desert Oasis High School. The purpose was to get kids outside and provide some practical and introductory science applications.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Assistant Manager Kaelber resumed efforts to pump water from Powerline Lake into the Phase 1 wetland. The water level of Powerline Lake is slowly rising and was beginning to flow from the lake to the Phase 1 wetland. The Phase 1 wetland was planted with millet and is bordered by sunflowers. It will provide excellent forage for waterfowl in the upcoming months.

Beaver Dam: Manager Buser cleaned out a beaver dam at the Nipper Unit. The dam was backing water onto the neighbor's property. He also set a beaver trap and successfully caught the nuisance beaver, which Assistant Manager Kaelber relocated to safer waters.

The nuisance beaver caught at the Nipper Unit

Maintenance: Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker finished mowing waterfowl holes in the pond next to the Lodge field in the reserve with the Marsh Master.





Before mowing



After mowing



Another after picture of the pond

Colockum Wildlife Area: Managers Lopushinsky and Hagan met with WDFW Region 3 forestry, wildlife, and habitat staff members on site of the proposed timber treatment in Section 9 of Colockum Creek.

WDFW and Yakama Nation staff members met to discuss proposed timber treatment in the Colockum Creek drainage, Colockum Wildlife Area



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik met with Kittitas Reclamation District (KRD) to discuss improving bridges over the KRD canal so WDFW can maintain the elk fence and herd elk back through return gates in the Page and Wagner Canyon areas. KRD placed reinforcing beams across the bridges to facilitate crossing, and asked WDFW to install barb wire gates to prevent cattle from crossing the bridges.

Elk Fence: Neighboring landowners reported a hole in the elk fence near the Spiritwind acquisition and watched elk tip toe over the cattle guards on the Taneum and south branch canals. The cattle guard gates were both closed. Manager Babik and Natural Resource Technician Hill patched a hole in the elk fence.



Hill assessing the hole in the elk fence



Hill repairing the hole in the elk fence

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman checked on the South Fork Cowiche Creek Flood Plain Restoration Project. The contractor began work on Wednesday, delivering about one load of logs per day. Hopefully work will pick up to two loads and work will be completed

soon. The safety closure along Cowiche Mill Road may need to be extended if work extends through this coming week.



Logs being placed by the contractor in the south fork Cowiche Creek flood plain restoration project

Wildlife Management

new regulations in a hunting forecast. Fidorra was also interviewed by a reporter for NBC-KNDU news on the topic.

Game Presentation: District Biologist Fidorra presented at the Richland Rod and Gun Club's membership meeting on game populations and

Cougar Seal: District Biologist Fidorra sealed a cougar brought in by a local hunter and also gathered supplies for pinning his first bighorn at a local taxidermist's office.

Big Horn harvested in Umtanum GMU by Tri-cities hunter

Mesa Lake Wildlife Area Tour: District Biologist Fidorra led a morning bird tour of the Mesa Lake Wildlife Area for the



local Audubon chapter. Highlights included an American bittern (rare in Franklin County) and a late sora seen foraging at close range. The tour participants were impressed with the location.

Colockum Thinning Project: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in a field tour to review a proposed thinning project on the Colockum Wildlife Area. Habitat Biologist Downes, Yakama Nation Biologist Kozma, and Bernatowicz had wildlife concerns with the project. Within the Colockum landscape, closed canopy stands are uncommon. Thinning, particularly on north slopes, will temporarily open the stand.

Oak Creek Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz worked on the resource wildlife section of the draft plan.

Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis: Time was spent connecting to the Remote Desktop Server (RDS) and downloading digital elevation models (DEM) that will be used in the analysis.

Grouse Wing Collection: Six wings were collected in the wing collection barrels.

Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Moore downloaded collared bull elk GPS data collected over the past year on the agency's S: Drive and transferred it to Graduate Student Meyers. Meyers will use these data to validate his bull elk habitat use model. Moore continued to check the status of our collared bulls and they all made it through the week.

Colockum Thinning Project: Biologist Moore attended a field tour, along with other WDFW personnel, to view stands involved in a proposed thinning project on the Colockum Wildlife Area and discuss the forestry prescription. Moore reviewed and created maps of GPS collared cow and bull use in the proposed thinning area at the request of Manager Lopushinsky.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technicians Hill and Leuck put up new green dot signs at the Pumphouse and the Corrals entrances to the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. They put up new maps as well.

New map at the Corrals kiosk





New green dot rules sign and map at the Pumphouse entrance to the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area

Monitoring: Natural Resource Technician Leuck toured the L.T. Murray, checking on closed gates, stopping into hunting camps to see how the season was going for hunters, and asking if they had any concerns or problems. He also passed out a few green dot maps to users and they were greatly appreciative.

Leuck also put up information signs

concerning a thinning project along Moonlight Canyon Road on South Cle Elum Ridge.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris, with assistance from customer service, printed and laminated signs for upcoming work on the Mellotte Bridge. The work is scheduled for the week of October 10, with the possibility of it carrying over into the week of October 17 (general deer season). Signs have been posted at Mellotte Gate and Newland Road junction notifying users of the work window and potential for delays crossing the bridge. Signs will be pulled as soon as work is completed.

Wildlife Management

Landowner Hunt Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to coordinate with Landowner Hunting Permit managers at Blackrock and Silver Dollar on scheduling hunting opportunity. With very limited elk activity due to this summer’s Range 12 fire, elk harvest has been minimal, but a hunter who drew a special permit for a Blackrock any elk permit harvested a bull this past week in one of the few areas that did not burn.



Successful Blackrock elk hunter

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

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted one hazing patrol in a tree fruit and row crop operation near Rattlesnake Mountain for deer and elk damage

issues. Although some sign was evident of deer in the area, no new damage was observed from either deer or elk. This is likely due to increased harvesting activity and fencing.

Silver Dollar Deer Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage complaint from a wine grape producer in the Silver Dollar area. Some browsing on grape plants had occurred, but the biggest problem seemed to be buck deer getting their antlers caught in the trellis wire and drip line watering system. Several nonlethal hazing strategies and the use of hunters to pressure deer away from the vineyards were discussed and will be utilized.

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a report from a landowner in the Yakima area saying elk were causing damage in their irrigated pasture and hay. Multiple hazing techniques were discussed, as well as the use of Master Hunters with special permits for the area.

Deer Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to receive reports of a mule deer buck residing at an export hay company at the Port of Pasco. Increased hazing effort will be performed.

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 checked on closure signs on Cowiche Mill Road. All signs remained up during the week. Huffman coordinated with Yakima County road crews, who agreed to clean out the Cowiche Mill Road Cattle Guard while they were doing road maintenance in the area. The cattle guard project turned into several days of work due to the large amount of dirt and gravel. Annual maintenance will occur from this point forward to make it an easier project. According to the agreement, work is to be performed by WDFW, so thank you to the county for getting it done this year.



County road crews finishing up maintenance on the Cowiche Mill Road Cattle Guard

Elk Fence: Manager Huffman received a phone call about elk fence down in the Hatton Road Area. The same person had called several weeks ago about fence being down. Huffman had checked the area and was unable to locate any fence down due to bad directions. Huffman received better information and was able to find about 100 feet of fence blown down with rotten posts. The fence was repaired and braced with 2x6s. A lot of posts in the area are rotten and the whole one mile stretch of fence is in bad shape.



Before and after pictures of elk fence repairs in the Hatton Road area



Colockum Wildlife Area: Managers Lopushinsky and Hagan met with a CAMP fence inspector on the south boundary fence repair project. We are ironing out details such as adding cattleguards and drop gates as needed. Since the new fence is an all-steel, fire proof fence, the contractor is using a compressed air rock drill to place the steel posts.

Rock drill being used by fence contractor on Colockum Wildlife Area fence project

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

White-nose Syndrome Monitoring, Bat Health, and Bat Conservation: Biologists Anderson and Tobin implemented surveillance of fall/winter/early spring bat activity via passive acoustic work.

Please report bat roosts and sick or dead bats at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>.



Setting up short-term, repeated sites as well as long-term sites in pilot efforts of bat swarming and hibernacula movements across the landscape – Photo by Biologist Anderson

Region 4 Citizen Landscape Amphibian Monitoring Seasonal Close: Biologist Anderson and staff members with Woodland Park Zoo provided an end of season class and thank you to citizen volunteers in the 2016 effort. Seventy-seven people participated in this season's effort. More volunteers need to register hours, but thus far we have 442 hours registered. Seventeen citizens are already signed up for the 2017 effort. Over 300 observations were noted, including rough-skinned newt, red-legged frog, Pacific treefrog, American bullfrog, long-toed salamander, and northwestern salamander. Discussions of why certain species may not be found in urbanizing landscapes and keeping an eye out continued (e.g. western toad and red-legged frog – both dwindling from developing areas from anecdotal evidence as well as efforts such as this). Continued requests to report invasive exotics and promote techniques for taking measures to reduce spread – like how to decontaminate gear and clothing – were also rehearsed with the group, which practiced these measures in the survey. Phenology across years, as well as landscape use, was discussed across species. The group also visited some back areas of the zoo where amphibian and reptile conservation efforts are underway.



Citizen efforts to document breeding amphibians across time. Here we have an effort in Washington Park Arboretum finding a Northwestern salamander egg mass – Photo by Biologist Anderson



Biologist DeBruyn responded to an injured golden eagle near the Concrete. It was examined by Research Scientist Watson and handed off to a wildlife rehabber.

North Cascades Elk Herd Plan: Biologist Yarborough continued to address comments from the last review and incorporate them into next draft.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm Data Processing: Projects Coordinator Brokaw processed water level, salinity, and temperature data from 11 ground and surface water monitoring stations located on and adjacent to the Fir Island Farm estuary restoration site. WDFW has been collecting this data set for three years prior to the restoration project and will continue to monitor for three years after the project.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited had a conference call with Snohomish County regarding permit requirements, fees, and timelines. Project Coordinator Brokaw also provided information for a county report needed for a road right of way vacation process and made arrangements with Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton for an archaeologist to begin survey work on the site.

Spencer Island Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw filled out a restoration project screening criteria matrix and updated the project outreach plan based on a meeting with the WDFW cross-program district review team the previous week. This process is consistent with the Region 4 WDFW Restoration Pathway, which guides restoration projects on WDFW

lands to ensure they are consistent with agency goals from a variety of perspectives in each of the WDFW programs.

Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project Ribbon Cutting: Region 4 staff members from Wildlife and Habitat programs hosted and attended a ribbon cutting event for the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project. Speakers at the event included Joe Stohr and Bob Everitt from WDFW, Will Stelle from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Sheida Sahandy from Puget Sound Partnership, Richard Brocksmith from the Skagit Watershed Council, and Skagit County Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt.



Ribbon cutting at Fir Island Farm. That is Brian Williams with Jenna Friebel.

Private Lands/Access Management

Flowing Lake Boat Ramp Repair:

WDFW Region 4 Access staff members worked onsite October 5, 2016. John Evans Jr., Tom Wampler, and Derek Hacker worked on the project.



Prepping the ramp for removal of broken planks



John Evans on the tractor with Tom Wampler assisting with placement of new ramp plank



Picture of finished repair work on the boat launch at Flowing Lake



Picture looking up the ramp of the new concrete planks

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

Wildlife Management

Gearing Up for Hunting Season: District 13 fielded lots of questions regarding where to go to hunt deer, clarification for Canada geese hunting in Snohomish County, and boundaries for various GMUs and how to find them on GoHunt.

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff members and volunteers to continue managing the pheasant program for the 2016 general pheasant season. Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell headquarters. He received 375 pheasants for this week's releases. Kessler and volunteers performed the releases Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. Manager Kessler coordinated with environmental workers performing weed control on the BP Unit. He posted signs and monitored the hunting use throughout the week. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Region 4 Volunteer Coordinator Dazey and others to seek out additional volunteer help for the Whidbey Island Pheasant Release sites. Pheasant release staff members have identified a need for additional help to ensure pheasants are released in a timely manner and made available for hunting.

Hamilton Landing Boat Launch Design Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Engineer John Hansen and City of Stanwood to develop a conceptual layout of the boat launch and parking facilities at the Hamilton landing site on the lower Stillaguamish River near Leque Island. This layout and other materials are needed to apply for a Boating Facilities Program grant due on November 1.

Johnson\DeBay Slough Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis constructed a second portable blind to be placed on the hunt side of the DeBay's Unit next week.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis finished installation of two temporary hunting blinds on the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis installed and brushed up a temporary hunting blind on the Samish Unit.

Tennant Lake Waterfowl Blinds: Manager Kessler surveyed the three hunting blinds on Tennant Lake. In addition to two new beaver dams blocking the channel to the lake, repairs will be made to two of the blinds before the waterfowl season begins.

View from Tennant Lake waterfowl hunting blind



Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts and website information for waterfowl quality hunt sites in the region. Nearly all the contracts for the 2016 waterfowl season are complete. These sites will go online as they become available to hunt. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo and Biologist Wingard met with multiple landowners and completed their access agreements for the upcoming season. Otto and Deyo built waterfowl quality hunt sites by installing parking posts, signage, and blinds.

Big Game Private Land Access Program Sites: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo visited the Acme area big game sites to ensure signage was in place. Otto and Deyo also installed additional signage after crop harvest. Private Lands Biologist Wingard prepared contracts for the Trillium Woods deer hunt on Whidbey Island. This hunt provides one of the few public big game hunting opportunities on Whidbey Island. Biologist Wingard will schedule landowner meetings for this opportunity in the coming week.

The Trillium Woods deer hunt provides one of the few public big game hunting opportunities on Whidbey Island



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

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Conflict: Biologist Smith removed a temporary electric fladry fence from a property near Enumclaw. The fence was excluding elk from damaging a corn crop (now harvested). Smith also conferred with two local landowners experiencing deer damage to vegetables. General season deer hunting was discussed, as well as upgrades to fencing already in place. Smith continued coordination with volunteers involved in ongoing elk exclusion fence maintenance and improvement work.

Hunting Season Questions: Biologist Smith responded to multiple contacts from the public inquiring about potential hunting opportunities in District 12.

Training: District 13 staff members completed mandatory IT training.

Equipment Clean-up and Organization: District 13 staff members cleaned, repaired, and organized various field equipment and made arrangements for routine maintenance and service due for an assigned vehicle.

Whatcom Wildlife Advisory: Biologist Yarborough attended the Whatcom Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance and provided comments.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm finished seasonal mowing at the unit. Manager Boehm also coordinated gravel delivery to three entrance locations to improve driving conditions for the pheasant team.

Ebey Island gravel delivery

Wildlife Management Plan Update

Meeting: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in a conference call meeting focused on advancing the progress on updating the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan. Manager Boehm contacted four new members for the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Advisory Committee to announce they were selected for the committee. Manager Boehm also conducted a tour of the Cherry Valley, Stillwater, Crescent Lake, and Ebey Island units with core team members Russell Link and Jamie Bails.



Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton coordinated with Project Manager Jenna Friebe on the final clean up and prep work for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Fir Island Farm Restoration project that occurred on October 5. Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove mowed the small field and other grass areas at the Fir Island Farms Unit with the John Deere 5300 and brush-hog. Natural Resource Specialist Meis assisted with setup for the event. The ribbon cutting provided an opportunity for the partner and funding agencies to have the first look at the completed project before opening to the public.

Natural Resource Specialist Meis posted new Game Reserve Boundary and Closed Area signs and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove adjusted the locations of Closed Area and Game Reserve signs on the new access site for the restoration project.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove prepared equipment and coordinated with volunteers to ferry all equipment off of the Island Unit on Thursday. Cosgrove began cleaning and winterizing equipment. Natural Resource Specialist Meis assisted with the process.

Johnson\DeBay Slough: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove posted two Game Reserve signs that had recently been stolen at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton continued to prepare maps, signs, and supplies for the hunter survey stations. Manager Rotton met with a local contractor to discuss the proposed project to repair the Wiley Slough Dike.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo coordinated with Private Lands Biologist Wingard to identify which waterfowl quality hunt program sites would be open to public hunting for the waterfowl season opener on October 15. Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Enforcement and Regional office staff members to ensure everyone knew which sites would be offered this year, what the sites' access mode would be, which days the sites would be open, and when the sites would become available.

GMU 418 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologists Wingard fielded several calls from GMU 418 special elk permit holders. Biologist Wingard offered ideas about where to focus their effort. Biologist Wingard also met with multiple Nooksack modern firearm special elk permit holders to distribute keys and tips. Later, Biologist Wingard toured portions of GMU 418 for special permit elk hunters. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo met with a GMU 418 elk hunter to deliver their gate key. Otto also coordinated with Officer John Ludwig to meet with a successful hunter for key return and tooth submittal over the weekend. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell followed up on GMU 418 private land gate access issues. Access issues were resolved, but continue to be problematic. Supervisor Caldwell also coordinated with private lands security staff members and provided them with updated harvest information.



Elk from a successful Nooksack special elk modern firearm permit holder

Ungulate Conflict Management:

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with landowners in the Acme area of Whatcom County to discuss recent elk activity. It appears a large herd of elk in the Acme area has been frequenting the private property less often now that hunting began. Witman responded to an elk damage complaint at an area located off Helmick Road in Skagit County. The landowner is attempting to protect newly planted fruit trees from elk damage. The

landowner has installed fence posts and additional resources were provided to assist with keeping elk out of the new orchard. Witman received a complaint that three bull elk had found their way through an elk exclusionary fence in Skagit County. After responding to the area, the elk appeared to exit on their own with minimal damage to the fence. Witman responded to an injured deer in the Lake Whatcom area. The deer was severely injured from a vehicle strike and had to be euthanized. Witman submitted two fence proposals to the North Cascades Elk Herd Working Group and Stillaguamish/Sauk-Suiattle Tribes for consideration. No objections were presented, and the proposals were adopted. Elk exclusionary fence materials will be purchased and applied by Natural Resource Technician Cogdal on 20 acres just east of Sedro Wooley and on seven acres in the Rockport area of Skagit County. Both properties have sustained chronic elk damage to agricultural crops. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell was contacted by a Whidbey Island landowner who is experiencing deer-related damage to a hybrid cabbage crop. Supervisor Caldwell visited the landowner and toured his crop area to document wildlife sign, determine eligibility, and provide claim process/DPCA-related information. The landowner stated that he will be allowing public access during the general season hunt, and if the problem persists, will reach out to WDFW for further assistance.

Bellingham Deer Immobilization: Wildlife Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, District 14 Biologist Yarborough, WDFW Law Enforcement Officer Valentine, and Whatcom County Humane Society responded to a report of a deer running through traffic and around a residential area with a large wire fence material in its antlers. The deer was located and successfully chemically immobilized. All fencing materials were removed and the deer recovered well.

When choosing to chemically immobilize an animal, WDFW must often recognize potential dangers that may be present



when the animal recovers. Here, the nearby ledge presented a potential dangerous situation for the deer, so response staff members decided to move the animal away to reduce the chances of injury to the deer.

The recovered deer with an ear marker. The deer decided to walk back to the ledge area after recovering.



Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

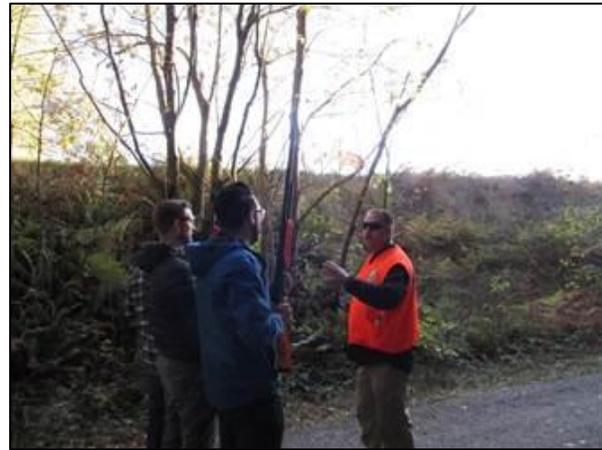
Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey sent out one new instructor applicant packet. Dazey attended and evaluated the teaching team that teaches at Custer near where Loretta Lyn started her music career. The teaching team is doing a good job meeting the need in the Whatcom County area.



Firearm handling and crossing obstacles



Live fire on the range



Instructor Paul Farmer providing instruction on the field course



Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey attended classes at Foster High School and spoke with the students about the importance of the DFW mission and how they could volunteer and assist the department to meet our obligation to the wildlife and people of Washington State

REGION 5

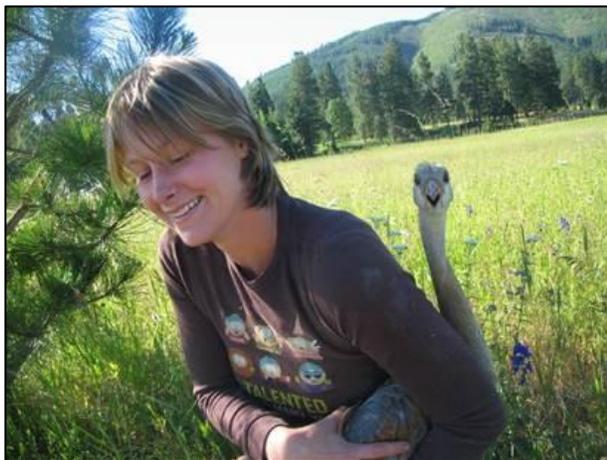
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sandhill Crane Mortality: Biologist Anderson followed up on a sandhill crane mortality reported at Conboy National Wildlife Refuge. The adult sandhill crane was found dead due to a collision with a powerline while crossing the refuge. Unfortunately, it was one of the adults from a known successful breeding pair on the east side of the refuge. The adult was banded in 2008 as a colt (juvenile) from another pair on the refuge. This mortality raises the awareness of the need to work with the local PUD to place aerial marker devices on the powerlines to improve visibility of cranes flying around the refuge. The local PUD was contacted about the mortality and further discussions will take place regarding powerline visibility.



Adult sandhill crane mortality from powerline collision



Crane banded as a colt (juvenile) in 2008

Mountain Goat Surveys

Goat Rocks Wilderness: Section Manager Harris and Biometrician Keren joined Regional Biologists Stephens, Meyer, and Holman to conduct a second round of ground-based surveys for mountain goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. This was part of WDFW's ongoing effort to monitor for signs of MOVI pneumonia in the goats. This survey is combined with surveillance through the

collection of biological samples from hunter-killed mountain goats and surveys conducted by volunteers during July of 2016. The most recent survey recorded over 200 goats, none of which showed signs of disease.



Mountain goat surveys

Mount St. Helens: Biologist Holman joined staff members from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to summarize data collected during the August survey of mountain goats on and near Mount St. Helens. Regional Wildlife Biologists Holman, Stephens, Bergh, George, and Meyers teamed with staff members from the Cowlitz Tribe and U.S. Forest Service (USFS), along with volunteers organized through the St. Helens Institute, to conduct the survey. The survey was partially impacted by unusually cloudy, foggy, and wet weather for August. In spite of the limited visibility, the survey resulted in a count of 151 goats (106 adults and 45 kids) on Mount St. Helens and the nearby Mount Margaret backcountry.

Mountain goats have recolonized the St. Helens landscape following the 1980 eruption and the population appears to be rising. Similar efforts conducted during 2014 and 2015 resulted in 65 and 152 goats respectively. Thanks to all who participated in the third year of the Mount St. Helens mountain goat survey. The project exemplifies the importance and value of cooperation among Tribal, State, Federal, and private stakeholders related to this valuable wildlife resource.

Citizen Science Cascade Range Elk Monitoring Project: Biologist George traveled close to one thousand miles visiting ranger stations and visitor centers in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, the Mount St. Helens National Monument, and Mount Rainier National Park to distribute materials to staff members as part of a new citizen scientist project designed to monitor elk groups for signs of treponeme-associated hoof disease. Whether it is hunting, hiking, camping, or backpacking, recreationalists are being asked to pick up a map and data form from a ranger station and/or visitor center to accompany them while they are recreating in the Cascades. If elk are observed, participants should carefully watch them for any signs of limping. However, all elk observations are desired regardless of whether or not limping is observed. Participants with

elk observations should fill out a form and map in its entirety and return it to the WDFW Region 5 office, any National Park or Forest Service office, or report observations online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/. This year-round project is being initiated as a continued effort to monitor the distribution of hoof disease in western Washington elk.

Western Pond Turtle Health Team Meeting: Biologist Bergh attended a meeting of the Western Pond Turtle Health Team in Olympia. She presented information on this year's trapping efforts to investigate the etiology of shell disease and capture sick turtles for treatment, bullfrog control efforts, and headstarting of hatchling turtles. The health team is made up of WDFW staff members and experts from across the country with the purpose of investigating the unknown shell disease that affects only the Washington population of western pond turtles. Other findings were presented at the meeting, but the etiology, true prevalence, and efficacy of treatments are still unknown.



Dusky Goose Surveys: Biologist Stephens conducted the first dusky goose survey of the 2016-17 survey season in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties this week. No duskies were observed during the survey effort. The purpose of the survey is to estimate survival rates. This is of particular management importance given that, starting last season, hunters were no longer required to check their geese at a check stations in dusky management areas. The dusky geese were collared on their breeding grounds in Alaska this summer.

Dusky goose surveys

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Scotch Broom Control: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Sample have been working to control scotch broom patches on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area that are not accessible from the 3100 road, which runs the length of the unit. These medium to large patches of scotch broom are located in places that can only be reached by ATV or on foot. Significant progress is being made to reduce the distribution of this plant in a large area of the unit, mainly east of the lower gate and southwest of the ford crossing, an area of over 150 acres. Earlier this year, volunteers on foot made progress removing large patches and single plants from many areas inaccessible by motorized vehicle, including areas along Bear Creek. There are still large areas of scotch broom in the southeast part of the unit, many of which are growing on steep hummocks, making them difficult to control.



Area showing recent scotch broom control efforts, Mudflow Unit, Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Reader Board and Sign Installation at Entrance to Simcoe Mountains Unit:
 Manager Van Leuven and staff members from the Central and East Klickitat Conservation Districts placed a reader

board and signs at the public entrance to the Simcoe Mountains Unit. The ground was hard and everyone took turns digging holes for the reader board posts. Besides the reader board, five other signs were put up by the group to help guide visitors in the use of the property.



Box Springs Road reader board

In addition, Manager Van Leuven and Forester Pfeifle met with adjacent landowner Blain and grazing lessee Schuster. Pfeifle and Blain marked about one and a half miles of property boundary with flagging while Van Leuven and Schuster drove up along the north boundary of



the unit to see what fencing, road crossings, internal road access, and signage exists there. Van Leuven moved a couple of Western Pacific Timber signs and posted three WDFW signs where appropriate. They encountered two small groups of wild horses along the fence and a few of Schuster's cattle were on the wrong side of the fence. They moved them back through a gate by herding them on foot.

Posting signs on prop boundary

Simcoe Mountains Unit Range Evaluation: WDFW Range Ecologist Burnham, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, Cattlemen Schuster and Blain, and Conservation District staff members toured the Simcoe Mountains Unit to evaluate the current condition of the range. A watering



area, a salt placement area, a burned area, and representative grassy pastures were viewed and discussed. Overall the range utilization appears to be light and few, if any, changes in use will be recommended.

Grass evaluation

Follow-up Western Gray Squirrel Nest Survey of 2015 Fuels Project, Phase II:

Manager Van Leuven and Technician Petrie initiated a follow-up survey of a project area for the presence of western gray squirrel nests (as an

indicator of squirrel activity). The area was the focus of a wildfire fuels reduction project in 2015, and the purpose of the survey is to determine whether or not the project had an impact on squirrel habitat quality. So far, there is a net increase in the number of nests within the project area. However, the survey is not complete yet.

Sondino Unit Sign and Water Gauge Maintenance: District Wildlife Biologist Anderson and Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven visited the Sondino Unit to check on possible encroachment



onto the WDFW property, mark the boundary, consider a habitat restoration project for implementation on a weedy field, and inspect signs. Seven missing or damaged signs were replaced and two new signs were posted.

Signs replacement

Later, Van Leuven cleaned and waxed water gauges to make them readable from shore. One pond was dry, and the pond bed was verdant with wetland plants that inhabit seasonally inundated areas. One such species, nodding

beggarticks, has sunny yellow flowers and is usually a short-statured plant, but was found growing to over three feet tall.



Nodding beggarticks

Forest Health Project: Manager Van Leuven worked with Forester Pfeifle, Habitat Biologist Bell, and Technician Petrie to mark trees in Units 1 and 2 of the planned timber thinning project on the Soda Springs Unit. The group is hoping to have the layout work and prescriptive marking finished in time for the harvest to begin this fall.

Agricultural Lease: Manager Van Leuven spent a day checking compliance with terms of the agricultural agreement on the Hatchery Unit. This required mapping the perimeters of two fields and patches of the standing wheat crop using a GPS, and verifying whether the amount of wheat left standing met the terms stipulated in the agricultural lease.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Mossyrock Habitat Fields, Ponds, and Trail Maintenance: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members performed maintenance work on the system of ponds and connecting ditches on the Mossyrock Unit. A local landowner hays the fields on this unit, but much of the grass and brush around the pond gets very little attention. The pond banks, pond bottoms, and ditches become choked with reed canarygrass and other emergent vegetation “weedy” plants such as cattails. Wildlife area staff members mowed back the vegetation using mechanical means. Additionally, they fixed breaches in the ditch banks caused by rodent activity as needed.

Kosmos Habitat Fields, Ponds, and Trail Maintenance: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members performed maintenance activities on the Kosmos Unit. Reed canarygrass, thistle, and blackberries are the dominant weedy species that reduce the habitat and recreational value of this unit. This unit gets a lot of recreational use from the community especially in the fall when pheasants are released. It is difficult for users to move through the fields, as the reed canarygrass can attain heights of six feet and blackberries block passage wherever trees provide structure for scaffolding. The maintenance activities on this unit are meant to reduce some of these barriers to user access. Additionally, ponds are mowed to improve visibility and access to migratory waterfowl. Mowing also encourages regrowth that benefits wintering waterfowl foraging. There are approximately two and a half miles of trail on the Kosmos unit. Wildlife area staff members perform maintenance activities on the trail as needed. The trail was mowed to keep back encroaching vegetation (the trail will be sprayed in the spring), and a large tree that fell blocking the trail was cut to restore access.



Kosmos Trail tree

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

Private Lands

Hunt by Written Permission and by Reservation:

Biologist Meyer spoke with a landowner about a potential new Hunt by Written Permission contract. In addition, Meyer finished scheduling hunting seasons and loading available hunting day schedules into the Private Hunting Lands Opportunity page for Hunt by Reservation properties in Region 5.

NOVA Grant: Biologist Meyer, District Biologist Eric Holman, and District Biologist Anthony Novack (Region 6) met with members of a private industrial

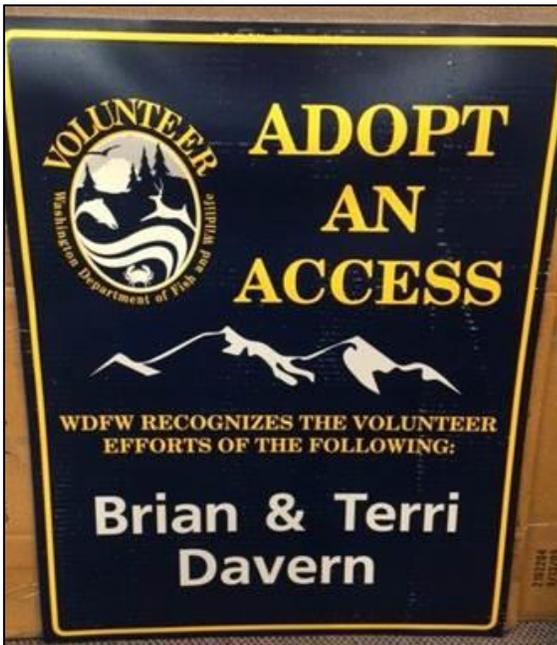
timber company to discuss their support of a grant application WDFW is putting together to reduce illegal activities during hunting season.

Access

Kress Lake: Congratulations to Brian and Terri Davern for adopting the Kress Lake Access Site. Litter pickup and trail maintenance are a few of the projects they have completed. We look forward to working with them and appreciate the hard work they put in.

Kress Lake Adopt a Site

Lacamas Lake: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes hauled several loads of gravel and ballast rock to pack around the boat ramps at Lacamas Lake. The lake level was lowered for yearly inspection and maintenance of the outlet and other structures around the lake.





Lacamas Lake gravel

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

Wildlife Management

Middle School Presentation: Biologist Bergh presented to three sixth grade science classes at Daybreak Middle School in Battle Ground. The students were in the middle of learning about animal populations and had just done an exercise in their textbook about mark-recapture population estimation for turtles. Bergh presented information on WDFW's efforts to use mark-



recapture estimation for western pond turtles, as well as information on black-tailed deer survival and reproduction, and how hunting is used to manage populations.

Western pond turtle presentation by Biologist Bergh to middle school science classes

Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a concerned citizen who observed a bear in his neighborhood in Lewis County. Conklin provided basic safety information.

Cougar: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin provided cougar outreach to a neighborhood that has had multiple sightings of a cougar in daylight hours. Conklin also installed a trail camera and installed a fox light where some of the cattle in the area congregate.

In addition, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin removed a trail camera she had set some time ago on a farm in Morton. No predators were captured on the camera, but wildlife was present.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin sealed a cougar this week. The hunter who harvested the animal stated he was standing on a stump watching elk when he heard a branch break. He turned to find the cougar approximately ten feet from him. The cougar was harvested in the Margaret Unit.

Biologist Meyer followed up over the phone with a landowner in Vancouver who reported a cougar attacking his sheep.



Alpaca Depredation: Biologist Bergh investigated an alpaca depredation in Skamania County. Clear evidence pointed to a cougar and Officer Myers followed up with the case.

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin received a call from a frustrated farmer in Cowlitz County who has been experiencing heavy loss on his CSA crops from deer depredation. Conklin will meet with the landowner next week to find a solution.

DPCA_C: Biologist Meyer and Sargent Wickersham met with a landowner in Klickitat to discuss elk damage on crops and future DPCA_C agreements.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Fisher Camera Trapping Project: Biologist Ament and Port Gamble Wildlife Technician Godbolt spent time together last week on the fisher monitoring project. They conducted the fourth and final check of all stations within Hex 514. This hex was monitored during the 2014 season by the ONP crew and no fishers were detected. All cameras were found to be secure at each station during the check. There were no detections of fishers at any of the stations. Unfortunately, the camera at Station 2 did not work properly during the second monitoring period, so the decision was made to continue monitoring this hex for another two week period. The camera at Station 2 was replaced on September 7. Camera problems occurred once again at Station 2 and at Station 3. The camera at Station 2 took no photos after set-up. There was hair on the snares, which was collected. The settings were inaccurate at a new camera placed at Station 3. They were modified during the previous check, but the camera did not capture photos when triggered by movement. The camera at Station 1 worked fine, but a bear came to the station two days after the last check. The bear moved the cubby completely out of view. A spotted skunk and a black bear sow with a yearling cub also visited this station. All gear associated with each station and flagging was removed during this final visit.



A black bear and spotted skunk seem to pose for the camera at Station 1



Black bear sow with yearling cub at Station 1 (after previous bear moved cubby out of view)

Sea Otter Photo Counting: Biologist Ament and Marine Mammal Biologist Jeffries joined USFWS Biologists Deanna Lynch and Sue Thomas in Lacey on October 4 to review counts of sea otters from photos taken during the annual survey effort from late June. Final numbers for otter groups were determined. The data from ground counters was used in some cases. The group had the most difficulty trying to identify pups associated with females within otter rafts. The annual report, with a population estimate, will be generated from the collaboration effort. It is noteworthy to mention that the population estimate in 2004 was 743. One enormous raft of otters near Hoh Head counted during the June surveys contained very close to this same number of otters. The “unofficial” estimated sea otter count for Washington in 2016 is 1789 (1686 adults and 103 pups). The group also spent time discussing the future of conducting the annual surveys. Safety issues with specific aircraft and work load constraints were discussed.



Raft of sea otters south of Hoh Head – color coding using ImageJ program was used to assist with counting – Photo “rainbow” of otters provided by Steve Jeffries

Dead Bald Eagles: Biologist Ament was scheduled to be at the USFWS office in Lacey on October 4, so she took this opportunity to deliver dead eagles she had been collecting the past few years. All eagles had been stored at freezers located at the Dungeness Fish Hatchery. The eagles were provided to Biologist Ament from the Northwest Raptor Center, Greywolf Vet Clinic, Clallam County PUD, Enforcement officers, and a few landowners. She spent time on

October 3 sorting all eagles and making sure all eagles had tags with relevant information. A total of 17 dead eagles were transferred to USFWS. The eagles had died from a variety of causes, including collisions with vehicles, injuries from fighting, head trauma, electrocution, shooting, and several unknown causes of death. USFWS Enforcement Steve Furrer reviewed information about the electrocution and shooting cases. It was determined that these birds were not needed as evidence. The dead eagles will be shipped to the repository in Colorado and Native Americans with permits will be provided feathers and other parts for ceremonial purposes. Continued efforts to collect dead eagles will help protect live eagles from being illegally killed and removed from the wild.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Butler coordinated the release of the last turtle that underwent treatment for Undefined Shell Disease at PAWS. Around eight turtles were captured in 2015 and sent to PAWs for treatment. After treatment, the turtles were cared for by two Cedar Creek



Correctional Center inmates over the winter as part of the Sustainability in Prisons Project through Evergreen State College. The two turtle technicians and two staff members from Cedar Creek, as well as the Western Pond Turtle Coordinator for the Sustainability in Prisons Project, attended the release. Biologist Butler demonstrated attaching a radio transmitter to the turtle and provided a radio telemetry lesson.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Butler and Hallock and Veterinarian Haman met with KING 5 reporter Alison Morrow to discuss Undefined Shell Disease (USD) affecting western pond turtles throughout the state of Washington. USD has been found in all six populations of western pond turtles in Washington. Over time, turtles affected by USD develop ulcers throughout their shells. While the cause of USD is still unknown, there is a lot of work being done to determine its cause, develop a treatment, and study the effects on the population. The full interview can be seen at <http://www.king5.com/tech/science/environment/turtle-shell-disease-scans-show-alarming-lesions/330253351>.

Biodiversity: Biologist Tirhi attended the monthly meeting of the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance. The Alliance is currently working on the Lower White River BMA Interjurisdictional Working Group's top priority action item, which is to expand the Citizens for a Healthy Bay's youth environmental stewardship program to other locations along the Lower White River and assist them with seeking funding. The program is three pronged: 1) education in the field thru data collection, 2) have same students conduct restoration activities, and 3) work with the owner of the property (jurisdiction) to retain the site for public passive recreation in the form of trails, wildlife watching, etc.

Fisher Monitoring: Biologist Michaelis checked three stations in Hex 21. This new sampling hex is just north of the city of Hoquiam. A photo of a black bear was taken, but no fishers were detected.



Black bear standing showing the girth and fall fitness prior to denning

Other

U.S. Navy Pacific Beach Annex Property: Biologist Novack met with the U.S. Navy and USFWS representatives to discuss the finalized integrated natural resource management plan for the U.S. Navy's Pacific Beach Annex property.

Habitat Restoration – Lower Satsop: Biologist Novack reviewed the proposed

Lower Satsop River Habitat Restoration project and conducted a site visit. The project, expected to start in 2018, should benefit waterfowl. Two deep ponds will be modified to create a shallow depth bank. Puddle ducks may benefit from increased submerged and emergent vegetation that will likely take root in these shallowed edges.

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

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Management: Biologists Sundstrom, Novack, and Michaelis met Regional Program Manager Calkins and the new Waterfowl Section Manager, Kyle Spragens, to discuss waterfowl management in the district and briefly tour some of the land area currently proposed through Lands 20/20 for possible acquisition.

Black Bear Boone and Crockett Scoring: Biologist Michaelis scored a black bear harvested by a Region 6 WDFW staff member near the town of Humptulips. The skull will easily meet the minimum score to be entered. On occasion, this service is provided to the public.

Private Lands /Conflict

Site Posting: Biologist Sundstrom coordinated with Biologist Harris and Technician Cain to begin posting the private lands waterfowl hunting areas in Grays Harbor County.

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

Wildlife Management

Questions From the Public: District staff members often receive requests from the public to identify a species by photo, description, track, or other. As example, Biologist Tirhi received the



following this week: “The first pic is the mysterious five toed critter print. It's about 3 1/2" x 4" big. The next pic is a "furry print." I get these often. It is a long haired critter! The third is another paw print. These canine prints I've been sending are XL, bigger than my 160-pound Newfoundland's, and the sightings confirm this is larger than my dog. He is several inches taller, but just as wide, and a bit longer than my dog. Let me know what you think. Thanks!”

Picture sent in by public requesting biologist assistance with determining the species