

Wildlife Program

Week of September 26 – October 2, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

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

Three Depredation Investigations: Private Lands and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor McCanna investigated wolf/livestock depredation events in Stevens and Ferry counties involving three separate cattle producers. There was one confirmed wolf-injured calf in the Profanity Peak pack area. There was also one confirmed wolf-injured calf and one probable wolf-mortality calf in the Smackout pack area. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Supervisor McCanna contacted range riders in Stevens and Ferry counties. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman assisted with wolf issues in Ferry County.

Assist District 1: Biologist Earl traveled to Colville to assist conflict staff members with wolf-related operations in the area for three days.

Coordination: Supervisor McCanna spent the majority of the week coordinating all efforts regarding wolf activities in District 1.

Livestock Checklists: Supervisor McCanna updated three livestock checklists in District 1 while coordinating with producers.

Peola Calving Areas: Natural Resource Technician Wade checked several active calving areas in Peola.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Western Pond Turtle Periodic Status Review: The statewide population size remains too small and is still heavily reliant on supplementation with head-started turtles. Natural recruitment remains low due to factors such as poor hatching success and predation on hatchlings. The recovery sites continue to need annual management to maintain habitat conditions. In 2012, it was determined that all six recovery populations have turtles with shell disease.

Private Forest Lands Conservation Partnership: Mike Kuttel, Jr. completed the final proposal for the Southwestern Washington Non-Industrial Private Forest Lands Conservation Partnership and submitted it to the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) for funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and

eight conservation districts will provide technical assistance and work with small forest landowners to develop and implement forest stewardship plans for forest conservation easements. These stewardship plans will benefit marbled murrelet and spotted owl.

Periodic Status Reviews: Biologists Gary Wiles, Lisa Hallock, and Derek Stinson completed draft versions of their periodic status reviews on woodland caribou, western pond turtles, and Sandhill cranes, respectively, and submitted these for 90-day public review. All three reports are recommending that these species retain their current status as state endangered species. These reports will be presented to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission at the January 2017 meeting.

Marbled Murrelet: Wildlife Biologist Steve Desimone (Diversity, Olympia), with assistance from Wildlife Biologist Gary Bell (Habitat, Olympia), conducted a field review of marbled murrelet habitat on private forest lands in Region 4. The landowner requested WDFW assistance to determine if a particular patch of forest represented contiguous habitat, as per Washington forest practices rules. It was determined that there was not a substantial habitat break and the polygon was delineated as contiguous habitat.

Nongame Technical Committee and Pacific Flyway Council: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan attended the annual fall meeting for the Nongame Technical Committee, which provides technical support to the Pacific Flyway Council. Joe served as Acting Chair for this meeting. The Nongame Technical Committee worked with the Study Committee to produce several joint recommendations and informational notes to the council. In addition, the Nongame Technical Committee produced recommendations for council endorsement, which involved three letters to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Conference: Biologist Steve Desimone attended a one-day session on Forest Wildlife and Biodiversity talks as part of the west coast regional meeting of the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement in Vancouver, Washington. A partial list of subjects covered by researchers from Oregon State University, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, and private forest companies included recent techniques in collecting and analyzing environmental DNA, new research initiated for marbled murrelets in Oregon, effects of wildfires on fishers in northern California and southern Oregon, experimental removal of barred owls to benefit northern spotted owls, occurrence of black-backed woodpeckers in green forests, and created snag dynamics and impacts on cavity nesting birds in western Oregon.

Training: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally attended the Crucial Conversations training offered at the Lacey offices, networking with colleagues across the agency. The training focused on fostering positive productive relationships and finding shared purpose, especially when discussions become difficult and the stakes are high. The training provided tools and practice to promote active, productive, solution-oriented communication and collaborative problem-solving.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Signage: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley and the Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever Habitat Chairman installed two signs for the two 40-acre fields at the Pheasant Forever habitat sites.



Newly constructed sign identifying Pheasants Forever and WDFW Feel Free to Hunt

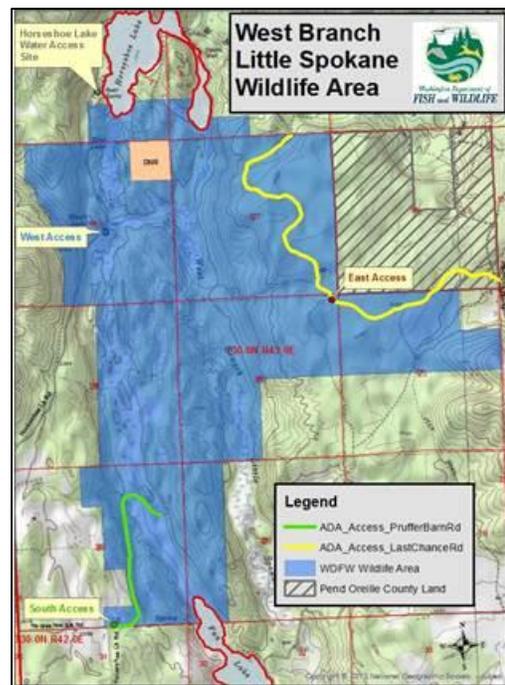
Proposed Trust Land Transfer: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer worked on finalizing a Lands 20/20 Project Application for a potential trust land transfer of a 40-acre parcel from DNR to

WDFW. The parcel in question is an inholding completely surrounded by the Rustlers Gulch Wildlife Area, as seen on the map below. It was a team effort, as the application was initiated by Wildlife Area Complex Manager Juli Anderson and completed with input from District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base, Habitat Biologist Karin Divens, Real Estate Specialist Brian Trickel, and Real Estate Manager Julie Sandberg.

Map of area – Image provided by Daro Palmer

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

Outreach and Education: Biologist Baarstad instructed two labs this week for students at Washington State University on the use of the rocket net for wildlife capture. The students were enthusiastic and appreciated the class. Thanks to Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley for the help.



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbits Partners: Biologists Volsen, Gallie, and Gibbs met with Professor Lisette Waits, Professor Paul Hohenlohe, and PhD candidate Stacey Nerkowski from the University of Idaho to discuss collaborative research and recovery objectives. The group toured the Beezley Hills and Sagebrush Flat enclosures.

Potential Arson Near Beezely Pygmy Rabbit Pens: Gallie was contacted by landowner Peter Lancaster and provided details on a suspected arson attempt on his land, which happens to contain both a release area and our most productive breeding enclosure. Grant County Fire Marshalls informed Lancaster of the small fire (quarter acre), located at the gate of his access road on Section 4, and that it was being investigated as arson. The truly amazing part was the fire was extinguished by locals who happened to come across it, preventing what could have developed into a major wildfire.



Fire area – Photo by K. Quayle

Wolverine Surveys: Biologist Volsen is working with Biologist Lewis to coordinate the installation of a wolverine survey sampling station in the Glacier Peak Wilderness. The site is part of a multi-state survey effort, of which Biologist Lewis is coordinating the Washington State portion.

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

Wildlife Management

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area – Waterfowl Hunting and Wetland Project Areas

Crop Conditions: Wheat has been harvested. Grain corn still stands.

Snow Depth: N/A

Condition Report				
Area	Wetland Project	Ice	Water Levels	Updated
Desert Unit	Winchester Ponds Regulated Access Area	None	Low, filling	9/26/16
Desert Unit	Frenchman Ponds Regulated Access Area	None	Dry, mowing ongoing, filling planned for October 1	9/26/16
Potholes Unit	North Potholes Regulated Access Area	None	Good	9/26/16
Gloyd Unit	Flood Flat	None	Dry ³	9/26/16
Gloyd Unit	Spud Field	None	Mostly dry, filling to begin in early-October	9/26/16
Gloyd Unit	Mansfield Pond	None	Full	9/26/16

³Due to temporary changes in Supplemental Feed Route (SFR) operations by the Bureau of Reclamation, this project area will likely be dry throughout most of the 2016-17 waterfowl season. This project relies on SFR water, which is not expected to resume until late-winter or early-spring.

Wildlife Areas

Methow Office Kiosk: Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin built an informational kiosk this week. The kiosk will be placed near the office's front door and will contain information packets and regulatory information. Wottlin also drafted an informative sign that provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions. Hopefully, this informative kiosk will reduce the number of unscheduled walk-ins during the general deer season.

Gloyd Unit Habitat Projects: South Lands Operations Manager Finger met with Columbia Basin wildlife area managers and Private Lands Biologists Cotton and Dougherty to discuss the next steps for ensuring the dense nesting cover plantings are successful. The objective of these efforts is to convert approximately 200 acres of old cheatgrass dominated food plots to a cover type suitable for nesting pheasants, gray partridge, California quail, and waterfowl. Additional habitat projects are planned for November 15-18 to diversify the grassland habitat with shrub rows which will provide riparian stabilization, thermal cover, and food for wildlife. Two register to hunt boxes will be installed to track gamebird harvest as the habitat types develop.

Winchester Regulated Access Area: Acting Manager Eidson continued to spend time at the Winchester Regulated Access Area in preparation for waterfowl season. Current low flows in the Winchester Wasteway have led to a significant lack of water in the fore bay and may lead to problems filling the project if the water level doesn't rise soon. Historic water levels at the inlet this time of year are typically around 31 inches. The current water level is less than 12 inches. The cause for the decline is not entirely clear, but it appears wasteway flows are staying within the wasteway channel rather than filling the side channel, where the Winchester inlet sits (essentially becoming an oxbow lake). WDFW has used some Duck Stamp and print funding and partnered with Ducks Unlimited to seek solutions, such as channel excavation and drafting a preliminary engineering design.

Private Lands/Access

Water Access Sites: Access Managers Harmon and Graves met with the new Statewide Water Access Site Coordinator Shane Belson. Shane was given a quick tour of some of the Columbia Basin water access sites, past projects, and projects still being worked on. This was a great opportunity to get to know one another and share ideas, issues, and future direction for the Water Access Program. Access Manager Graves and Natural Resource Technician Jesse Trump spent a full day preparing Jameson Lake for public recreation and the fall trout fishing opener. Preparations included tree and weed removal, weed pulling, sign installation, weed whacking, and deep cleaning of the restrooms. Graves also hung blue jean soaked wolf urine patches at one of his beaver problem sites. Graves is optimistic to dissuade the beaver from continuing to plug the culverts, and as a result keep water from running over our WDFW road. He will monitor this site carefully. Shane Belson rode along with Mike Dehart for half a day. They talked about all the different sites and some of the bigger issues in managing them. They also discussed a new program that can collect data for site time and inventorying by using the iPhone. Olympia created this program and it should be very helpful on access sites and wildlife areas. Shane was amazed at the terrain diversity in the area.

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

Wildlife Areas

Scotch Creek and Sinlahekin Wildlife Areas Advisory Committee (WAAC) Meeting:

Manager Haug, Scotch Creek Manager Olson, and Wildlife Area Planner Vigue coordinated the second Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) meeting, which gathered comments from the newly drafted Scotch Creek and Sinlahekin Wildlife Area management plans.

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting and provided valuable feedback that will be incorporated in the planning document. Individuals represented a number of organizations/agencies, including DNR, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Okanogan County, Backcountry Horsemen, Audubon Society, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Okanogan Wildlife Council, Trout Unlimited, and local farming and ranching interests. The next meeting associated with the planning effort will be the public scoping meeting scheduled for November. Managers Olson and Haug also updated the group on wildlife area news and accomplishments.

Quincy Unit Camping Access: South Lands Operations Manager Finger responded to a request from a member of the public, forwarded to WDFW by Senator Warnick, for an explanation on camping restriction status at the west end of Quincy Lake. About five years ago, in response to increasing use for horse camping and increased impacts to native habitat, an agreement was reached between the backcountry horsemen and WDFW to allow camping at three designated sites distributed throughout the Quincy Unit. This also blocked access to areas highly disturbed by both camping and unauthorized off-road vehicle use. The individual was hoping for WDFW to reopen the area since it has become revegetated. Finger coordinated with local staff members and determined that the area should remain blocked to vehicle access to continue protections for the habitat. Though it has become revegetated, it still requires weed control efforts.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik met with a neighboring landowner, Tribal Habitat Biologist Nicolai, and the Program Manager from Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to discuss restoration potential of our newly acquired 15.4 acres adjacent to Taneum Creek. Discussions were focused on addressing the head cut, restoring the adjacent floodplain, removing the previous owner's access road, and preventing cattle access to this parcel.



Head cut in Taneum Creek

Fence/Crossing: Manager Babik visited the site of the solar powered creek fence/crossing structure that is part of the ongoing cooperative Heart K project on USBR land at the mouth of Taneum Canyon. The USBR crew did an excellent job on the cable and chain across Taneum Creek. Hopefully it will minimize elk movement on to private property.



Electric cable and chain across Taneum Creek

Gnat Flats: Natural Resource Technician Hill checked on portions of Gnat Flats for weeds. Hill found that many of the sections he sprayed last year were pretty clean. He did find some ventanata grass he will spray in the fall. Hill also checked on weeds at Hell's Kitchen in the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area.



Russian thistle die off at Hell’s Kitchen in the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey attended a field tour of a planned woody debris placement project in upper Oak Creek. The tour was led by the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. Trees will be harvested off WDFW, USFS, and The Nature Conservancy managed lands and placed in the stream across all ownerships.



Rock Creek Unit Thinning: Forester Mackey met with a contractor to begin work on non-commercial thinning in the Rock Creek Unit. Much of the week was spent with contract compliance. The crew has completed roughly 110 acres to date.

Thinned portion of a young timber stand on the Rock Creek Unit

Wildlife Management

Sage Grouse Translocation: District Biologist Fidorra worked with the Yakima

Training Center and contractors on translocating sage-grouse from northern Nevada. Fidorra assisted in trapping and transported six captured hens to the Yakima Training Center after the second night of trapping. A total of 18 female birds were released on the Yakima Training Center to help augment the genetics of the small population.

One of 18 female greater sage grouse translocated to Washington from Nevada

Raptor Monitoring: District Biologist Fidorra collected bald eagle and Swainson’s hawk data for two different contractors requesting information for upcoming monitoring projects in the area.

Bighorn Sheep Paper: Biologist Bernatowicz spent much of the week analyzing data and editing the multi-author paper “Management responses to pneumonia outbreaks in 3 Washington State bighorn herds: Lessons learned and questions yet unanswered”. The paper will be published proceeding the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council Conference.



Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis: Biologist Moore completed a series of nine 16-day home range polygons using the Brownian Bridge Movement Model (BBMM) on 2011 GPS data of one Tieton herd collared animal. These polygons will be used as the home range portion of a fine scale habitat use model. Time was also spent investigating methods to define rock or escape terrain, which may be excluded from the analysis area. The most promising idea found was to use Vector Ruggedness Measure and look for areas of high topographic complexity. This method was used in the original bighorn sheep resource selection modeling, but it appears to be fairly course. Hopefully, running this method and refining the values selected will be helpful to identify rock outcroppings.

Grouse Wing Collection: The wing collection barrels were checked and nine wing samples came in from the week.

Colockum Bull Study: A mortality was investigated just southeast of where the Colockum Pass Road meets the Arthur Coffin Game Reserve. The GPS-collared bull appears to have been a wounding loss.

Human-Wildlife Interaction Presentation: Biologist Moore presented to a First Lego League team on WDFW's involvement with wildlife conflict and the Interstate 90 connectivity project. The annual competitions theme this year is Animal Allies. More information can be found at <http://www.firstlegoleague.org/challenge>.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman developed informational signs to be posted at the safety zone closure along Cowiche Mill Road. Assistant Manager Berry then posted safety zone signs along the road and informational signs at the primary shooting range site. The area was monitored twice a day by wildlife area staff members and so far signs have stayed in place. Work by the contractor has not begun due to equipment issues. Huffman also coordinated

with master hunters who will patrol the area, contacting hunters and target shooters and providing information on the closure and where they can go to target shoot.



Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky assisted with the WDFW National Hunting and Fishing Day event held on October 1 at the East Wenatchee Gun Club. There was a good turnout, and kids got the opportunity to try shooting .22s, shotguns, and air rifles, and also practice casting and learn about firearm safety.

A 9-year old future hunter practices shooting an air rifle while being coached by WDFW Master Hunter Reno Pellegrini



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technicians Leuck and Hill installed a yellow reader board in the North Fork Manastash. They also put up signage at the Tamarack Springs reader board and fixed a DNR sign at the Robinson gate.

Natural Resource Technician Leuck and the new reader board at North Fork Manastash

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Biologist Longoria, in collaboration with DNR, presented

information at a public meeting on the Manastash Ridge Trails planning project. There was good turnout, with about 50 people in attendance. Following the presentation and a question and answer period, the public broke up into two groups, hikers and mountain bikers, to write down their comments and concerns regarding the project. Staff members received a lot of positive feedback about including the public in the planning process.

Access

Site Maintenance: Natural Resource Worker Barbosa installed additional toilet paper holders at the Ringold Spring Access Site bathroom near the boat launch. The access site has seen a large increase of fishermen over the last few weeks. Additional porta johns have been placed at the overflow camping area.



Day use parking at Ringold Springs



Overflow parking at Ringold Springs



Vernita Access: Vernita continues to be a very popular site. There are currently 20 porta johns dispersed over the site.

Vernita access

Whitstran Access: We continue to have an issue with fishermen parking along the canal road instead of using

the Whitstran parking lot. A post with a no parking sign was replaced after the first one was removed after being up only a week.



Parking along canal road at Whitstran access



Replacement post at Whitstran access

Wildlife Management

Feel Free to Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman spent much of the week replacing signs at three Feel Free to Hunt properties in Benton and Franklin counties. Stutzman also collected the registration slips for the Register to Hunt properties south of Kennewick.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Hazing and Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand patrolled multiple wine grape operations in southern Benton County along the Columbia River for deer hazing and damage documentation. Both nonlethal and general season hunting have aided in reducing damage impacts by deer.

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with several landowners in the Rattlesnake Mountain area to discuss elk activity, wheat planting schedules, and coordinate damage permit hunting.

Tree Fruit Operation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand inspected a large tree fruit operation for deer damage in the McNary Dam area. Several trees in the orchard received damage from buck deer rubbing the velvet from their antlers, although browsing activity has been reduced.

Deer Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a call from a hay export company in Pasco concerning a buck deer living in their fenced compound or covered barn. Paintball guns will be used to haze the deer from the area.

Fladry Fence: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand repaired a large section of the electrified fladry fence installed on a tree fruit operation on Rattlesnake Mountain. A group of elk blew through a large section of the fence after being hazed from the orchard.

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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser gave a tour of Wildlife Area units in Franklin County to Administrative Assistant Julia Anderson and District Fisheries Biologist Hoffarth. The tour was to help with understanding Wildlife Area regulations to relay to the public when needed.

Colockum Wildlife Area: The Wildlife Area Assistant Manager used the John Deere tractor and disk to plow a fire line around the Tarpiscan agricultural fields. We hope to burn off the fields this fall in preparation for spring tillage.

Fire line plowed around agricultural fields, Colockum Wildlife Area



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 collected guano samples and scoped sites for surveillance of fall/winter/early spring

bat activity. Work will continue this week in a joint effort with USFS. Anderson is lining up access with property owners and acquiring any equipment still needed.

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

Cave invertebrates have been found to carry the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. Thus, they have the ability to move this fungus around to environments where bats may roost or hunt for these insect, which plausibly increases the chance of spreading this fungus and the resulting disease that can occur in affected species of bats – Photo by Biologist Anderson



Waterfowl Data: Biologist Yarborough compiled and analyzed historical waterfowl data from District 14. The newly established databases will help look at trends and provide accurate information to internal and external customers.

Wolverine Study: District 14 picked up camera trapping supplies for the upcoming wolverine study from Olympia. The cameras will be deployed by December in an attempt to photograph wolverines.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm Data Download: Projects Coordinator Brokaw downloaded 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 gave a presentation to a grant review panel for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Program (PSAR) to request funding for the project. Additionally, WDFW learned this week that the Leque project ranked as the top project in the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) funding round.

Spencer Island Restoration Project: WDFW Region 4 staff members working in the Snohomish delta from all programs met to review the proposed Spencer Island Restoration Project. The group filled out screening criteria as part of the Region 4 Restoration Pathway to evaluate that the project is consistent with WDFW goals and objectives. The group also began developing a communications and outreach plan for the project. Later in the week, Projects Coordinator Brokaw gave a brief presentation on the project to the Snohomish County.



Corn harvested at Cherry Valley

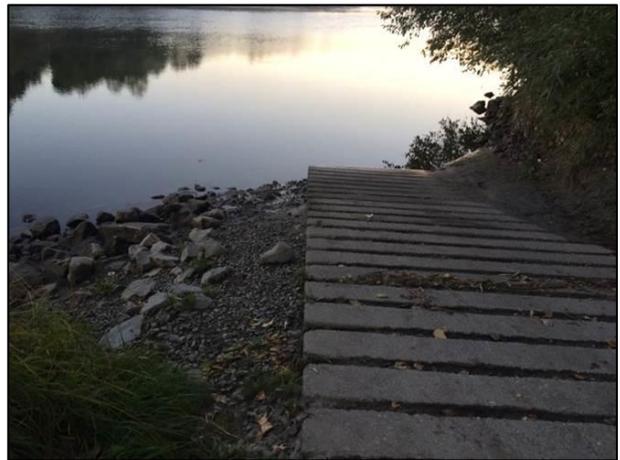
Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended a Spencer Island Estuary restoration meeting conducted by Project Coordinator Loren Brokaw.

Private Lands/Access Management

The Nature Conservancy Coordination: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with The Nature Conservancy Stewardship Manager Shaw on species and ecosystem monitoring contacts within WDFW. Supervisor Caldwell also provided Manager Shaw with scientific resources for his review.

Sierra Pacific Industries Temporary Access Closure Coordination for Fiscal Year 2017:

Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Sierra Pacific Industries and District 14 Biologist Yarborough on outreach and pamphlet notifications for a Fiscal Year 2017 temporary access closure on Sierra Pacific property. Particular access routes are set to close due to construction for fish passage, road maintenance, and other habitat related needs. The temporary access closure is set to occur in May of 2017, and it is estimated to take up to three months to complete the required maintenance. Members of the public will still have limited access to the west and east side property entrances over this timeline. However, this closure may impact GMU 418 spring bear hunters and potentially other hunting seasons. More information will be provided as efforts develop.





A WDFW crew replaced the last 10 planks on the boat launch Hat Slough boat ramp on the Stillaguamish River. Old planks were removed and new planks were put in their place. The crew also installed a new armor-flexing side curtain to help with plank washout during high water events.



Lake Bosworth in Snohomish County had new signs installed on the sign board after the old ones were covered with graffiti

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Area 4941 Special Permit Elk Hunt Coordination: Natural Resource Technician Cogdal coordinated with Elk Area 4941 special permit hunters. Two hunters were successful and were very appreciative of the effort WDFW put into private timberland access in Region 4.

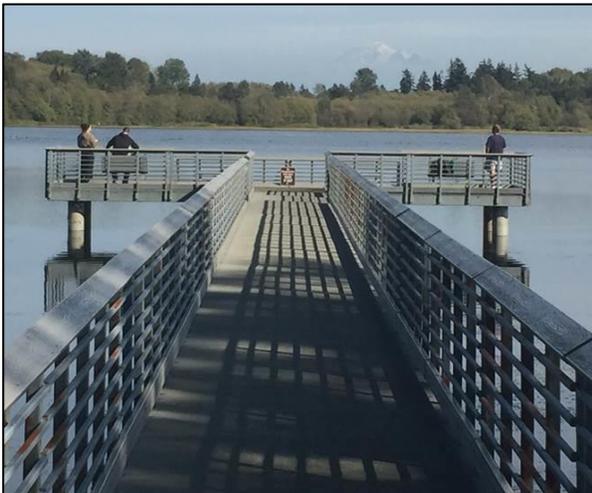


A successful Elk Area 4941 muzzleloader special permit hunter



A successful Elk Area 4941 muzzleloader special permit hunter

Mountain Goat Check-in: District 13 met the successful hunter from the Boulder River mountain goat permit hunt and took measurements of his animal. The hunter reported very high satisfaction with his once-in-a-lifetime hunt.



Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Planning Meeting: Staff members from all Region 4 programs participated in an all-day meeting to contribute towards updating the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area 10-Year Management Plan.

Anglers on new pier at Lake Terrell

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff members and volunteers to kick off the 2016

general pheasant season. Manager Boehm was onsite for the pheasant opener to greet the hunters at the Ebey Island Unit. Manager Boehm trained staffer Tom Wampler on loading and planting pheasants on the Duvall area units.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove mowed areas of naturally occurring moist-soil vegetation in areas of the Barn, Crescent, Broadlin, and Ole Thompson fields on the Island Unit. Most plants beneficial to waterfowl (millet, Bidens, smartweed, marsh bristlegrass) had gone to seed, and mowing these low areas will allow earlier visible sheet water and increased early forage and field access for waterfowl.

Island Unit Tour: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove led a tour of the Island Unit for the Northwest Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association. Cosgrove explained this year's

agricultural plantings, manipulations, and beneficial moist-soil vegetation present on the site, as well as locations of five new blinds constructed this summer. Manager Rotton attended to field other questions related to Skagit Wildlife Area hunting access and other projects. Cosgrove posted an informational map at the backside landing on the Island Unit. He also assisted Washington Waterfowl Association members with the installation of shotgun shell receptacles.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove spent two days at the Samish Unit mowing cattails and other vegetation in ponds and low areas. This is part of a multi-year effort to increase plant diversity in sculpted ponds using mowing and water level manipulation. Natural Resource Specialist Meis finished constructing a new portable blind for installation on the DeBay's and Samish units. The blind will be placed in the field next week for the opening week of waterfowl season.

Skagit Headquarters Unit: Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA) installed and dedicated a bench on the site to honor an active WWA member and longtime Skagit Wildlife Area volunteer, Jim Hamlin.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts for Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP) sites across Region 4. Nearly all the contracts for the 2016 waterfowl season are complete. Biologist Wingard continued preparing waterfowl sites for online use. 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 WQHP sites by installing parking posts, signage, and blinds. Otto and Deyo mowed several WQHP sites in Skagit County to improve hunting opportunity. When these sites are mowed, sheet water will be visible sooner, attracting more waterfowl to the area.

Private Lands Big Game Hunting Sites: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo visited the Acme area Big Game hunt sites to ensure signage was in place after high winds. They also check the harvest of crops on these properties to install additional signage after crop harvest.

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 Wildlife Conflict: Biologist Anderson coordinated with USDA Services and Seattle Audubon regarding outreach on bird control around airports. Anderson also relayed information to USDA Wildlife Services and discussed feral hog reports in an area of District 12. Anderson also provided a number of osprey nest removal permits. Anderson has initiated a request to exclude peregrines from an urban site in Seattle due to ongoing issues with management and take potential.

Elk Fence: Biologist Smith coordinated with volunteers involved in ongoing elk exclusion fence maintenance and improvement work. Smith also responded to multiple calls relating to elk in agricultural fields, gardens, and a small timber farm. Hazing strategies, fencing options, and rules relating to damage tags were discussed. The small timber farm will be allowing access to general season elk hunters (has some picked out) and trying some provided hazing tools (bangers, Critter Gitter).

DPCA: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman entered seven new damage prevention cooperative agreements into the contracts system this week. Witman also met with landowners and updated an additional four contracts. Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal continue to monitor and direct Elk Area 4941 hunters to the Day Creek area to address ongoing damage to a corn crop.

A pickup load of nest boxes constructed and donated to the agency by a local volunteer. Boxes are available to the public at the Mill Creek office while they last.



Everett/Jim Creek Naval Installation Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP): District 13 met with partners from the US Navy, National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration, and USFWS to discuss the 2016 INRMP and offer input. This group meets annually to review natural resources plans and projects that occur at Jim Creek, Smokey Point, and Everett facilities owned and operated by the Navy. Review of the INRMP is a requirement of the Sikes Act, authorized by the U.S. Congress.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and Tom Wampler conducted seasonal mowing and installed barrier fencing to control illegal access into the unit.



Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the dike repair job was completed this week.

Cherry Valley dike repair completed

Fir Island Farm: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove weeded and mowed areas at the Fir Island Farms Unit in preparation for the ribbon cutting ceremony next week to commemorate the end of the dike removal project.

Fence Installation: Manager Rotton met with a local vendor regarding fence installation on the public access portion of the dike at Fir Island Farms and coordinated with Project Manager Jenna Friebel on final sign details for the project. Manager Rotton met with Officer Lucci to discuss the posting of the game reserve boundary post-project and questions from the neighboring hunt club landowner. The two also examined the final field preparations following removal of the construction staging area on the site.

Johnson\DeBay Slough: Meis verified corn harvest on the Swan Reserve and posted new unit maps at the Johnson/DeBay's and Samish units. Meis posted safety zone signs at the Johnson/DeBay's Unit and Jensen Access.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton has been coordinating with a local vendor hired by Ducks Unlimited for the Samish Unit retro-fits. Work is scheduled to be completed next week.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Wildlife Viewing: Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with staff members from Skagit Land Trust to discuss potential opportunities with potential funding sources. Several exciting ideas, including an interpretive boardwalk on Skagit Land Trust properties, were discussed. Biologist Wingard will continue to work with Skagit Land Trust staff members to identify opportunities for partnership. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with San Juan Conservation District staff members, San Juan County Land Bank, and Warm Beach Camp on future wildlife viewing opportunities. Biologist Caldwell is set to follow up with these folks in future weeks to assess how WDFW can assist with future and ongoing conservation and stewardship projects.

GMU 418 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard fielded several calls from GMU 418 special elk permit holders. Biologist Wingard offered ideas about where to focus efforts. Biologist Wingard met with multiple Nooksack modern firearm special elk permit holders to distribute keys and tips. Wingard toured portions of GMU 418 for special permit elk hunters. Wingard made contact with several hunters who were enjoying their time in the woods. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo met with a GMU 418 elk hunter to deliver a gate key. Otto also coordinated with Officer Ryan Valentine to meet with a successful hunter for key return and tooth submittal over the weekend. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell toured private lands to check on access issues and relay findings to Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). Supervisor Caldwell found one major access issue (broken lock) and informed SPI of the location and issue. This access issue prevented access to a major section of land.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated two hunter education classes. Dazey assisted an instructor to change the date and venue for two of his upcoming classes. The classes will be conducted at a new venue. Dazey delivered supplies to the chief instructor at the Stilliguamish Natural Resources Center. Chief Instructor Graves was joined by three other instructors who are teaching tribal and non-tribal students. Coordinator Dazey answered another instructor questions in regards to a new venue in the Federal Way

Sumner area. Dazey entered two new instructors into the Kalkomey system after they had been certified at last week's pre-service training. Dazey picked up three applications to become a hunter education instructor from the team that teaches at Camp Pigott. The team at Camp Pigott is very strong, but they are always looking to recruit instructors to assist.

Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey answered many questions during the week in regards to class availability, military exemptions, the deferral process, bow hunter education, and other hunting-related topics. Many students wait until close to hunting season to take hunter education classes. Unfortunately, this time of high demand is also the time that many of the volunteer instructors are hunting, and getting into classes can be challenging. In Region 4, through August this year, only 74% of the available seats were reserved. Part of the challenge is early in the year, when there is low demand, many classes only go partially full. Add in a 17% no show rate and the challenge is only increased. To answer the challenge, the hunter education division is working with instructors to find strategies to decrease the no show rate.

Washington Wild Future: Coordinator Dazey participated in two events designed to highlight what WDFW means to the citizens of the state and what they can do to assist the department with meeting goals and responsibilities to the citizens and wildlife of Washington. The first event was the United Parcel Service safety day, where Dazey presented on the hunter education program and on volunteer opportunities for groups to assist WDFW. Many good contacts were made, and several corporate groups expressed interest in learning more about how they could participate in service to WDFW. Many people stopped by to ask questions and WDFW Hunter Education was very well received.



The second event was at Naval Air Station Whidbey, where Dazey and the base wildlife officer presented during the Safety Stand Down on many opportunities for service personnel to safely enjoy the wild opportunities Washington has to offer. Military exemption information, GoHunt, and hunter education opportunities were presented and well received.

The multi-talented Hunter Education Coordinator, Steven Dazey, at a public outreach event

National Hunting and Fishing Day: Coordinator Dazey, along with the Hunter Education Division and many volunteers, staffed the department's National Hunting and Fishing Day event held in East Wenatchee at the North Central Washington Gun Club. The event was well attended and gave many youth the opportunity to shoot air rifles, .22 caliber rifles, a .223 high powered rifle, and a shotgun for the first time. Many NGOs participated, including the National Wild Turkey Federation with recently retired Capt. Mann. They brought a Laser Shot set up with a turkey blind and let the youth shoot from a simulated turkey blind. There were also representatives from the Mule Deer Federation, USFWS, and WDFW's Fish Program. The TIP

trailer was manned by WDFW Enforcement. Many businesses donated either supplies or prizes for the event. While at the end of the day all were worn out, everyone agreed the event was a huge success and the smile on the youth's faces made all the work well worth the effort. The parents were all very thankful of the department for this event and made sure to offer much praise for all who made it possible. Plans are already underway for the 2017 National Hunting and Fishing Day event, which is scheduled in Region 4.



National Hunting and Fishing Day

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

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Release: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to recruit, train, and coordinate two pheasant release teams in preparation for the coming season. As before, Manager Boehm will be running two teams and net pens to support the Duvall area and Ebey Island units.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Land Access Program Quality Assurance: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell toured selected Region 4 Private Land Access Program sites to assess personnel accomplishments and site needs. All private land site blinds, parking lots, survey boxes, etc. were in excellent condition. Likewise, private lands personnel accomplishments and performances were noted and reviewed as exceptional. Region 4 Private Land Access Program staff members have been building blinds, coordinating with private property owners, assessing field conditions, and working very hard to ensure Region 4 is the benchmark for similar programs throughout the country.



A newly completed waterfowl hunting blind in Skagit County



View from inside a Waterfowl Quality Hunt blind. This blind is located directly in front of a low area that accumulates sheet water. Private Land Access staff members, in coordination with the farmers and the private land owner, have planted barley and other forage for migratory birds at this location. These added habitat features enhance the quality experience of the site.

REGION 5

No report submitted this week.

REGION 6

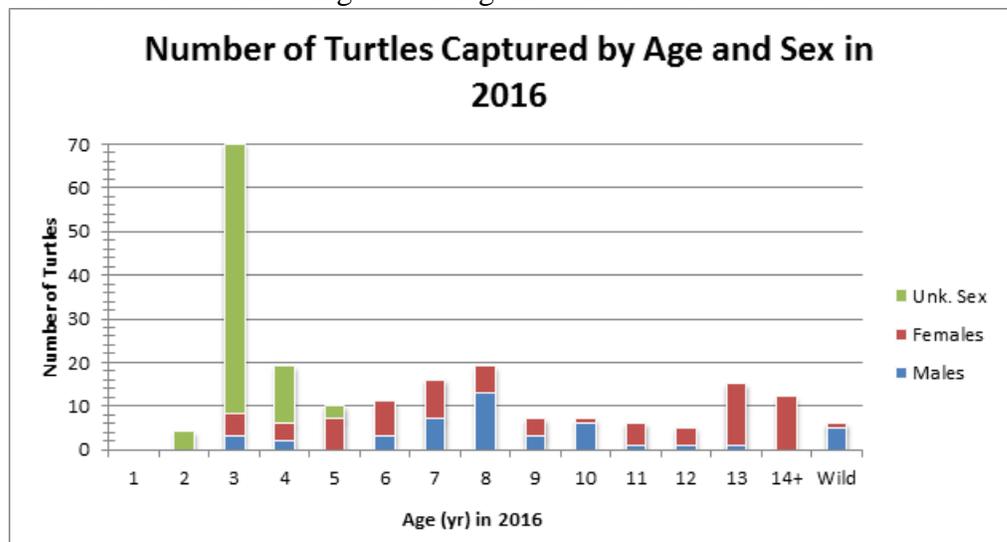
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Lands 20/20 Proposals: Biologists Tirhi and Butler completed and submitted an internal Lands 20/20 application for the purchase of easements on seven parcels of private property in Thurston County. These sites are used by federally threatened/state endangered Oregon spotted frogs for laying eggs. Once approved, Tirhi will move on to writing various grant applications requesting funding.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Butler attended a western pond turtle health team meeting. This was the first of a series of meetings occurring this fall and it focused on

summarizing work done this past season. Biologist Butler provided a short summary of the 2016 trapping effort conducted at the Pierce County recovery site. In total, 207 individual turtles were captured in 2016, and each turtle was assessed for signs of shell disease. In



addition, 17 nests were located and 85 eggs were transferred to the Woodland Park Zoo for head starting. The next health team meeting will focus on defining the 2017 prioritizes.

Fisher Camera Trapping Project: Biologist Ament and Port Gamble Wildlife Technician Charin Godbolt spent time together last week on the fisher monitoring project. They conducted the third check of all stations within Hex 513. This hex was monitored by the District 16 team during the 2014 season 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 1 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 1 was replaced on September 14, 2016. All cameras worked properly for all stations during the monitoring period. Station 1 was visited by a spotted skunk

and a bear on two separate occasions. Spotted skunks and another bear were detected in photos at Station 2. Various species were documented at Station 3, including Steller's jay, robin, squirrel, chipmunk, and spotted skunk. All stations were resupplied with fresh bait and lure. A new cubby was placed at Station 1 since the bears had done some damage. The stations for this hex will be removed on October 13, 2016.



A black bear and a spotted skunk pay a visit to Station 1



A black bear standing at bait tree for Station 2



A Douglas squirrel visited Station 3 a few times

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Habitat Improvement: Biologists Ament and Hays met with DNR Forester Graywolf Nattinger, along with WCC crew leaders Peter Allen and Chelsea Krimmer from the Department of Ecology, on September 29, 2016. The team conducted site visits to two known Taylor's checkerspot butterfly sites located west of Port Angeles. A main focus of the meeting was to review and discuss proposed methods to control scotch broom at both sites. This noxious weed has increased in density at both sites and could adversely impact many plants that are essential habitat for the butterflies. Knapweed is also present along roads at one site. Methods to remove and prevent distribution were discussed. The meeting also gave Biologist Hays an opportunity to review the work completed by the WCC crew early in 2016. DNR and WCC crews will be able to devote time to weed control efforts in the next few

months. If they have more time available this fall they will initiate further tree and brush clearing at the more western Taylor's checkerspot butterfly site.



Biologist Hays with a DNR forester & WCC crew leaders



Scotch broom patches growing at Taylor's checkerspot butterfly site



The group reviews maps of habitat enhancement units



Biologist Hays reviews project work from last season

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

Wildlife Management

Signage at Lower Dungeness Unit: Biologist Ament may need to assist with posting signs at WDFW wildlife areas close to her home office. She conducted some reviews of signs at the Lower Dungeness Unit and Three Crabs property last week. There was some vandalism of signs at both sites. Some new wording was added to a sign at Lower Dungeness and the Discover Pass sign at Three Crabs was severely damaged. Biologist Ament provided Access Area Coordinator

Belson information about the sign damage. She is waiting to see if her assistance will be needed to replace/post new signs at the Lower Dungeness Unit.



New added sentence to sign at Lower Dungeness Unit



Damaged Discover Pass Required sign at Three Crabs

Access Areas

Asphalt Repairs / Kitsap Lake: Pot holes and edges were repaired using cold patch on the asphalt roadway and parking lot at Kitsap Lake. The cold patch was generously donated by Lakeside Industries.

Ramp Protection and Parking Lot Maintenance: The Access Team armored nine ramps in two counties, and several loads of rock were used for filling voids between planks and adding edge protection to prevent erosion damage. Six additional sites were also addressed, filling holes at the entrances, roadways and parking areas.

