

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

April 6-7, 2007

"A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife"

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

ACHIEVE HEALTHY, DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTING HABITATS

Flooding in Yakima River Basin: The Region 3 Habitat Program staff have been contacted by several private landowners regarding localized flooding of streets and homes located along various small tributaries in Kittitas County. The recent warm weather is resulting in significant snowmelt within the headwaters of tributary streams originating in the foothills of the Colockum Wildlife Area. Coleman, Cooke, and Caribou creeks are flowing over banks at several locations causing minor flooding and bank erosion. The Teanaway River is also experiencing minor flooding and localized lateral scour, particularly where riparian vegetation has been removed or under-sized water-crossing structures exist. The Naches River has hit flood stage a few times in the past week due to rapid snow melt, resulting in lateral scour, threatening a portion of SR12 near Yakima. Habitat Program staff are responding by providing technical assistance and Emergency HPAs as needed to address flooding and erosion concerns.

Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP): While implementation of most YTAHP projects in the Kittitas Valley involving passage and screening are on schedule, there have been a few landowners that to date have been unwilling to participate in the YTAHP process to allow public funds to be used to address passage and screening problems at their irrigation diversions. Two of these projects are fully funded, but landowners haven't provided permission for accessing their water diversions. WDFW will schedule additional meetings with these landowners to attempt to resolve these issues, and if no resolution is found Enforcement officers may be requested to provided assistance in seeking compliance of passage and screening laws.

Priest Rapids Project 401 Clean Water Act Permit: WDFW staff reached final agreement with Department of Ecology staff and Grant PUD on all key aspects of the 401 permit for the Priest Rapids Project, which includes Wanapum and Priest Rapids dams. This is the final step in the FERC relicensing process for the project, unless the terms of the 401 or the license are appealed. Key aspects of the 401 include the existing settlement agreement for salmon and steelhead. Also included are the existing Hanford Reach flow agreement, with addition of a coordinating body for monitoring; provisions for development and implementation of sturgeon and lamprey management plans with the objective of bolstering populations of both; development and implementation of an aquatic invasive species control program; and agreements on baseline monitoring of resident fish populations and stocking of resident fish in Grant County lakes.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Steelhead: Staff responded to a resident who lives along Spring Creek, a small tributary stream in the lower Yakima River, regarding her concern with a steelhead in the creek and work proposed by the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District (SVID) that could potentially harm the fish. Staff identified the fish as potentially a mid-Columbia summer steelhead and alerted the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding the steelhead's presence. NMFS was able to resolve the issue through consultation with representatives of SVID. The district will postpone work until a later date when fish and incubating eggs are not present.

Abalone Restoration Pilot Study: A pilot study designed to test whether outplant of cultured abalone is a viable restoration strategy to address significant declines of wild abalone stocks in Washington is being conducted in Freshwater Bay, in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This week, WDFW, in collaboration with the University of Washington, is surveying four study sites for wild populations and releasing tagged hatchery raised juvenile abalone. One hundred fifty (150) abalone are being outplanted per site and protected from predation during their acclimation. All outplanted abalone will be removed in one year to reduce potential genetic impacts to wildstocks and to assess the genetic profile of survivors. This work is being funded in part by a SeaDoc Society.

Meeting the Invasive Zebra/Quagga Mussel Threat: The Aquatic Nuisance Species Unit is working closely with the Columbia River Basin Team (CRBT) as part of the National 100th Meridian Initiative to address the increased threat of zebra/quagga mussels invading Washington waters. The quagga mussel is a close relative of the zebra mussel and this is most apparent when you realize that "quagga" is actually the name of an extinct zebra (the horse-type) species. Unfortunately, this aquatic quagga is more likely to make other species extinct as it even out-competes its close relative, the zebra mussel.

Frye Cove Community Outreach: Staff participated in a community outreach meeting organized by The Nature Conservancy and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund regarding their proposed Olympia oyster habitat restoration project at Frye Cove in Eld Inlet. A dozen local property owners along with representatives attended the meeting from Thurston County Parks & Recreation and People for Puget Sound. The habitat restoration proposal is to place Pacific oyster shells at two locations within the cove to serve as a foundation for native oysters and other associated intertidal species to colonize. Similar native oyster habitat restoration work on WDFW tidelands in Liberty Bay has produced very promising results. The community participants at the Frye Cove meeting were all supportive of the proposal. Staff also met with a representative of Thurston County Parks & Recreation to discuss shellfish concerns regarding a bulkhead removal and nearshore restoration project funded for Frye Cove County Park. The County representative is interested in discussing bulkhead removal and replacement methods that may pose the least disturbance to native shellfish.

Windy Point Wind Farm: Staff was instrumental in achieving a mitigation agreement with Cannon Corporation for their Windy Point Wind Farm. The company will provide \$30,000 to fund a long overdue and very important golden eagle study. In addition, they have committed to donating 30-acres of Oregon white oak woodlands to WDFW that serve as habitat for western gray squirrels.

Revised Mosquito Control Aquatic Permit; Methoprene: IRM and Wildlife Program staff have worked with Department of Ecology regarding the revision of the aquatic mosquito control programmatic permit. Among other things, industry and some control district representatives (e.g., Grant County) have requested removal of special restrictions on the use of Methoprene. Methoprene has been implicated in the decline of amphibian populations. We have, however, recommended risk adverse use restrictions in areas where sensitive state listed species are present (e.g., northern leopard frog populations on WDFW lands in Grant County) and a human health emergency (West Nile virus) has not been declared. The revised permit was issued March 7 and WDFW specific requests were accommodated, another example of good interagency work and cooperation.

Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Annual Maintenance and Operation Area Permit Coordination Meetings: March 21, 2007, kicked off over twenty meetings statewide between Regional Habitat Program Managers (RHPMs) Area Habitat Biologists (AHBs), and their WSDOT counterparts statewide. The meetings are working well to streamline HPA permitting of over 1,200 hydraulic projects a year statewide. Projects include emergencies, fish passage, and chronic environmental deficiency projects. WSDOT's statewide General HPA did significantly reduce AHB permit load to allow them more time to focus more on the high risk, unscheduled WSDOT projects.

Early Statewide Water Supply Expectations: As most have probably guessed by now, statewide water supplies and stream flow expectations are looking much better for this coming summer and fall than they have in the last couple years (during which statewide or regional drought emergencies were declared). Normal peak snowpack accumulation, and subsequent water year final predictions, does not occur until April 1. However, current (March 1) reports indicate an expectation for near normal to above normal April to September stream flows for the majority of the state. Statewide snowpack levels are currently 116% of average (78-142%).

Wenas Creek Feedlot: Yakima County recently approved a 500-head livestock feedlot near Wenas Creek. A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued for the project that has been opposed by a number of agencies and neighbors. WDFW expressed concerns regarding water quality impacts associated with run off from manure storage and feeding facilities at the feedlot, and the expected impacts to the riparian area of the creek associated with the proposal to over-winter 500 additional head of cattle on the remaining 100 acres adjacent to the feedlot. Yakima County did not conditionally require any means to protect riparian buffers or to adequately protect groundwater and surface water from contamination, and there are no maximum grazing densities along stream within riparian areas. Feedlots and grazing are currently permitted uses under current zoning. Neighboring residents are appealing the County's approval of the feedlot on the grounds that critical areas are not adequately protected. WDFW staff is working with Ecology staff to identify water quality monitoring needs and means to protect the riparian area from high-density livestock confinement. Fencing along the riparian area is likely the only means to protect it, but the landowner to date has been opposed to any fencing along the stream. The proposed feedlot site was also the location of a significant wetland fill violation that involved the Environment Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Hoodsport Pollution Abatement: The pollution abatement facility provides for improved water quality discharge to Finch Creek and Hood Canal. The facility is designed with the assistance and guidance of the Department of Ecology Water Quality Program and meets Agency Standards for Pollution Abatement Facilities. Hoodsport Pollution Abatement Facility Phase I meets and exceeds discharge guidelines for the Department of Ecology General Discharge Permit for finned fish aquaculture facilities. Hoodsport Pollution Abatement facilities are designed by a Consultant Architect and Engineer agreement with Kennedy Jenks Engineers of Seattle, Washington. The facilities are managed by the Engineering Division of WDFW Business Services Program.



PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Olson's Resort-Sekiu: Terry Legg met with representatives from State Parks, the Cascade Land Conservancy, Community Trade and Economic Development, and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation regarding a proposal to acquire Olson's Resort in Sekiu. All recognized the importance of keeping the boat ramp and parking open to the public. Staff will meet with Olson's onsite in hopes of laying out a strategy that will protect this important water access for the public.

Columbia River Fisheries: The commercial fishery ended on March 23, with a total of 2,700 spring chinook landed during the three days of fishing. Large mesh nets were used on the first day (March 5) and tangle nets were used the last two days (March 20 and 22). Preliminary estimates of stock composition show the commercial fishery at 100% of its mainstem allocation of upriver chinook; additional impacts remain for SAFE fisheries. Prices paid to fishers were \$10.25, \$8.50 and \$5.50/pound for the three periods, respectively. The commercial fishery is complete, unless a run size update shows a larger than predicted upriver run.

Presentation to Puget Sound Salmon Recover Council Policy Subcommittee: Pat Chapman sat on a panel discussion of the Policy Subcommittee of the Puget Sound Recovery Council and discussed the role of the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) program in the big picture of habitat protection. The subcommittee was interested in the mechanics and constraints of issuing HPAs, and how (or if) they could influence its effectiveness in protecting habitat.

March Razor Clam Opener: Thousands of razor clam diggers descended on the Washington coast when the city of Ocean Shores celebrated its first annual Razor Clam Festival Saturday, March 17, 2007. Saturday's rainy windy weather was perfect to draw over 5,000 people into the new Ocean Shores Convention Center to enjoy the festival. Unfortunately, many quickly discovered that the rain and wind were not as conducive to clam digging, as they headed out to meet the late afternoon low tide to dig their own razor clams. However, by the time the smoke had cleared, a total of 35,000 digger trips (coastwide) had been made with the average catch at 14.0 clams (per digger trip) during the course of the 3-day opener.

Clam Enhancement:

1. With the assistance of volunteers from District 16 and Washington Sea Grant, 800,000 hatchery-reared Manila clam "seed" were planted on the Point Whitney public tidelands. This effort should provide 200,000 harvestable clams within two years. Staff also planted 300,000 Manila clam "seed" on the agency's Triton Cove Tidelands with the assistance of volunteers from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. This enhancement should provide 75,000 harvestable clams within two years.
2. Staff planted 400,000 juvenile Manila clam "seed" within the Point Whitney Lagoon public tidelands. This enhancement will produce approximately 100,000 harvestable clams within two years. The Lagoon was last planted in 2000. Successful Manila clam enhancement in both the Lagoon and neighboring Point Whitney Tidelands has resulted in a large biomass of clams, longer sport seasons, and an extremely popular recreational fishery.

AmeriCorp Crews Restore Wetland: Staff coordinated and used two AmeriCorps crews to restore a wetland adjacent to the mouth of the Klickitat River. Blackberry bushes were removed and 200 Oregon white oak seedlings were planted for future fish and wildlife habitat.

Hatcheries To Begin Mass Marking of Fall Chinook at all Lower Columbia Hatchery Facilities: Staff from the Hatchery Evaluation Assessment Team along with hatchery staff will begin marking approximately 17 million fall chinook later this month. In addition, approximately 2.7 million spring chinook will be mass marked during the same time frame. This will be the first year with the goal of marking the entire Lower Columbia fall Chinook hatchery production. This will allow for future selective fisheries in the ocean, Lower Columbia and various tributary streams. Marking is projected to be complete by mid-June.

Search and Seizure of Wildlife Parts: The Clallam County Drug Task Force contacted Officers regarding possible wildlife violations they may have uncovered during the execution of a search warrant. During the search, the task force found several wildlife parts that included a fresh deer and elk hide, the head of a 2-point deer, and a suspected eagle feather. WDFW Officers followed up on the observations and seized the items. Several possible charges have been referred to the Clallam County prosecutor.

Suspect Barricaded in Vessel: Officers responded to a county deputy call for assistance in Westport. The deputy was dealing with a 300-pound individual who barricaded himself in his vessel. The individual used a knife and a gaff to keep the deputy away from the boat. After using a Taser on the individual 6 times and spraying him approximately 7 times with pepper spray, Officers came to the conclusion the suspect was immune to these tools. After being tased, the suspect would just rip the prongs out. After the US Coast Guard and additional officers arrived the individual was eventually taken into custody.

Otter Caught Incidentally: Officers contacted a local trapper who had come into the office to have an otter sealed. Officers inquired into how the otter was trapped and determined it was trapped pursuant to a damage permit. The man stated it was caught in a Conibear trap. The man produced two damage permits, which allowed him to trap twenty beavers. The man stated the otter was caught incidentally. Officers advised the trapper that all carcasses caught pursuant to a damage permit must be disposed of and cannot be used for personal use or profit. A call to Olympia confirmed this was correct. The otter was seized. This particular contact has generated a considerable amount of debate and it seems as though there is some ambiguity in the law for which the trapping community is arguing. The issue is in reference to the retention of hides trapped pursuant to damage permits.

Mole Trapping Violators: Officers spent considerable time working on information for a search warrant on a business that was making a substantial living illegally trapping moles for a fee. This business has been cited previously and also warned in 2005. Captain Hebner participated in several radio talk show programs concerning the recent enforcement actions of non permitted and unlicensed Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCO) that are illegally using body gripping traps to kill moles. Another business involved as well has ignored verbal warnings and, once citations were issued, continued to disregard the NWCO legal requirements, the trapping license requirements, and the prohibition against body gripping traps. One business attempted to try their case in the court of public opinion using both television and radio. Captain Hebner represented the agency on KVI (570), the Kirby Wilbur Show, and KIRO (710).

FUNDING GOAL:

ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WASHINGTON STATE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC

Oil Spill Penalty Money to be Used to Fund Nearshore Protection and Restoration

Projects: Money collected from oil spill penalties is deposited into the Coastal Protection Fund (CPF) and a portion can be used to restore or enhance public natural resources. The CPF Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from the departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, State Parks, and Fish and Wildlife, participated on the screening committee to evaluate and prioritize project proposals. The advisory committee recently recommended that Ecology provide over \$156,000 to support six restoration and acquisition projects in Puget Sound and Grays Harbor. The selected projects are expected to benefit and support the State's nearshore, estuarine and salmon restoration priorities. The following projects that will benefit from oil spill penalty funds are:

- Salmon Creek Estuary Restoration in Discovery Bay (North Olympic Salmon Coalition);
- Rainbow Marsh Estuary Restoration in the Swinomish Slough (Skagit River Systems Cooperative);
- Smugglers Slough Estuary Restoration (WDOE, Lummi Business Council);
- Frye Cove Bulkhead Removal (South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group);
- Pirates Cove Estuary Restoration (South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group);
- Bergquist Property Conservation Easement (Capitol Land Trust); and
- Bottle Beach (Grays Harbor) Native Plant Restoration (Washington State Parks).

Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Flood Damage Claims: CP&E Engineering and Habitat staff provided a field tour to FEMA and National Marine Fisheries Service staff to show the flood damage and repairs that have been done at the Granite Falls and Sunset Falls fishways. Preliminary indications from FEMA are that all of the repairs done at these facilities will likely be considered eligible for FEMA reimbursement (75% of actual cost). Habitat is compiling narrative descriptions of work done to date and narrative descriptions and cost estimates for work yet to be done. Financial Management is compiling invoices and timesheets for work done to date. There is a possibility of splitting the Sunset Falls work into two separate FEMA claims, one for work at the fishway facility, and one for work necessary to reestablish the upriver release site. This may allow more timely approval and payment for work done at the fishway facility.

Wind Power Research Grant: Jim Watson, working with David Anderson and Bill Weiler in Region 5, secured \$30,000 for the purchase of satellite transmitters to study raptor behavior pre- and post-construction of wind turbines in the Columbia River Gorge. The funds are being administered through the Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute. We have captured and telemetered the adult male golden eagle at one associated nest site, and plan to capture and telemeter breeding red-tails.

New Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Wildlife Practice: At the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference, the federal Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced a new allocation of CRP acres to states for wildlife, with Washington receiving 8,200 acres. No state funds are required for match (as with CREP). This will allow us to take existing CRP practices and alter them to target wildlife benefits for species covered by the Endangered Species Act or with significant population declines. Most CRP practices, including general signup practices, are allowed. This allows FSA to pay both a \$100 per acre signing incentive at enrollment and a 50 percent cost share, plus a 40 percent practice incentive (which realistically means 90 percent cost sharing). We will need to put together a proposal for FSA to consider by fall. This is good for wildlife!

Triploid Trout: The Legislature provided WDFW with proviso monies to enhance recreational fisheries in 2007 through increased hatchery production. A portion of these funds was used to purchase an additional 41,000 triploid rainbow trout for planting into Washington's lakes. The Fish and Wildlife Commission approved these, as well as the earlier purchase of 73,460 triploids, and the list of lakes into which the fish will be stocked. These trout are sterile rainbows that have the potential to grow to trophy size if abundant food is available, and if not, harvested the first season after stocking. The triploids are produced by TroutLodge, Inc., and by the Nisqually Trout Farm; both growers are certified as producing healthy, quality fish.

Fir Island Waterfowl Committee: Captain Hebner presented a status report on the 2006-07 snow goose hunting season on Fir Island as well as a progress report on the collaborative groups effort in developing a snow goose hunting management plan for Fir Island at the March Commission meeting. Subsequently, Captain Hebner and his staff along with Bridget Moran hosted another Fir Island snow goose community collaboration meeting. The meeting was attended by a number of representatives from the local agriculture community who are suffering goose damage and who are seeking some positive solutions. It was good for our core group to hear and learn from these constituents as we wrestle with increasing goose populations and damage issues. Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Solomon was also in attendance.

COMPETENCE GOAL:

IMPLEMENT PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE SOUND AND PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS, CULTIVATE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND AGENCY CREDIBILITY

Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve: A meeting was held with the WDFW Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve Advisory Board on March 20, 2007. The purpose of this meeting was to determine actual 2007 oyster sale tracts and establish a minimum per bushel bid price. The advisors joined WDFW staff on a trip out on the bay to the proposed sale tracts where their status was evaluated. It was decided to sell oysters from two locations, the lower Naselle River and the north end of Long Island. The advisors recommended selling both areas due to the size of the oysters and their tendency to "rabbit ear" with increasing density. It was felt that waiting an additional year would diminish the value of the oysters. Minimum bids for the majority of tracts was set at \$2.00 per bushel, with one tract set at \$1.50 and another at \$0.80 per bushel. Expected revenue from this year's sale should be around \$150,000. Staff will prepare bid specifications next week, which will then go to Olympia for processing. Bid openings are planned for the first week in May. Recall that 40% of the funds generated by the sales of oysters in Willapa Bay return to a WDFW fund that is used to manage these reserves. During the meeting, WDFW staff and the reserve advisors also discussed ideas for research projects that could, in the future, be funded by oyster reserve funds.

Later in the week, the WDFW Willapa staff also inspected oyster reserve beds in the Nemah area, which are scheduled for harvest next year. There was concern that this tract would not be salable due to the meager set in 2005. Inspection of the beds revealed a good set and with an additional year of growth this area should provide sales in the \$125,000 range.

Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines (SHRG) Training: WDFW is organizing three, two-day workshops on the Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines for June 12 & 13 in Tumwater, June 19 & 29 in Mount Vernon, and June 26 & 27 in Yakima. The training will introduce the audience to SHRG and provide a basic understanding of stream-based processes and effective approaches to stream habitat restoration. If anyone misses this year's training, we will be offering additional classes in the future. We also hope to video this training and place it on the web. Staff registration began March 26 after 12:00 midnight; the cost is \$75 and will cover the 2-day training, SHRG document (800 pages with binder), and refreshments/lunch. Space is limited, so please register only if you are involved in permitting, reviewing or designing stream restoration projects. To sign up, visit: <http://www.coastaltraining-wa.org/>.

WRIA 35 Instream Flow Rule: The Middle Snake (WRIA 35) Planning Unit has reached a final consensus on instream flows for the Tucannon River and Asotin Creek. The Planning Unit agreed to allocation limits during winter and spring months that will protect high flow function for stream ecology and migration flows for salmonids. The Tucannon allocation limit is 18 cfs for November, 25 cfs December, and 30 cfs through June 15. The allocation limit is cumulative for the entire Tucannon River. Asotin Creek allocation limit is 18 cfs December through June 15. The Asotin Creek instream flows are set at the 40% exceedance with a statement of intent regarding the permitting of new surface withdrawals during July through October. The planning Unit has agreed to address ground water issues with language that will be developed within the next few weeks. This is important progress for WRIA 35 and provides excellent protection for the native fish and key ESA species that inhabit this watershed.

Spokane County Commissioner Meeting: Jeff Lawlor and Mark Wachtel met with Bonnie Mager (Spokane County Commissioner), and city and county planning staff to discuss coordination on development issues in the county and city. Spokane is the second largest city in Washington and is experiencing heavy growth pressure. Staff met with the commissioner and city/county staff to discuss how we can work better to address natural resource concerns in light of this growth. Items discussed include Habitat Management Plan Requirements, critical area mapping, county/city-DFW coordination, and comp plan/critical area ordinance (CAO) updates.

Major outcomes of this meeting: 1) WDFW will supply a letter to the county and the city recommending that a Habitat Mgt Plan be required whenever a development intersects a mapped "critical area" (Priority Habitat and Species, open space, riparian, etc.) – the city agreed to require a Habitat Mgt Plan based on this letter unless we recommend otherwise – the county will use this letter to explore that option. Our hope is that the county will default to a management plan unless otherwise recommended by us. WDFW also agreed to review management plans and work with applicants when possible. 2) WDFW agreed to coordinate a mapping effort between WDFW, county, and city planners to add GIS layers that anticipate growth in the county and outline critical wildlife corridors/other key habitat that should be protected when development proposals occur. The idea is that by identifying corridors and key habitat, connections between these natural areas can be preserved, rather than being eroded piece-meal as development encroaches. At this point, developments are considered individually as applications come in. Critical habitat may be protected in that specific plan, but there is not always a connection of that protection with other development plans. By mapping these connections ahead of time they should be preserved as limitations are placed on applications according to the mapped areas.

WDFW will work closely with the county/city in CAO revisions and stand by them to help defend these revisions. To help accomplish this, Karin Divens has been assigned as the GMA Biologist for Region 1, effective April 1, 2007.

Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan Public Meetings and Web Page:

To introduce the Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) project to the public, a series of six public meetings has been scheduled across the state between April 30 and May 15, the specific dates and locations are provided below. All of the meetings are scheduled from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM.

Monday, April 30 Yakima Regional Library 102 N 3 rd St. Yakima 98901	Tuesday, May 1 Cashmere Community Center 201 Riverside Dr. Cashmere 98815	Wednesday, May 2 Spokane Valley Library 12004 E Main Ave. Spokane Valley 99206
Tuesday, May 8 Skagit Valley College 2405 East College Way Mount Vernon 98273	Thursday, May 10 Lacey Community Center 6729 Pacific Ave. SE Lacey 98503	Tuesday, May 15 Vancouver Community Library 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd. Vancouver 98663

Both the Hydraulic Project Approval and Wildlife Areas HCPs will be discussed at these meetings. The public meetings are designed to provide an opportunity to educate the public on the projects and provide input. For both HCP projects, a web page has been developed to keep stakeholders informed of project progress and to access information and documents prepared in support of HCP development. The web address is: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hcp/index.html>.

Lyons Ferry Hatchery (LFH) Named “Facility of the Year”: Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP) Coordinator, Scott Marshall, named LFH the “Hatchery Facility of the Year” at the LSRCP annual meeting in Boise, Idaho on March 13-15, 2007. Scott cited “the quality of the fish produced, condition of the facility, morale and teamwork of the staff, excellent communication, and open and honest way the hatchery conducts business” as reasons for the award. He was also very impressed with the general feeling and outlook of the employees at LFH during recent visits, and said it was a simple decision to give this site the award. Congratulations to everyone at LFH and in the Complex for this well-deserved recognition.

Citizen Science at the Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Outreach staff took 140 fourth graders to visit the Sunnyside Wildlife Area to collect NatureMapping data and study the various resident species. In preparation for their planting season, the students also studied the plants they will be establishing in the area this May. These plant species include: ponderosa pine, a native rose, and sagebrush. The students also experienced sessions related to the mammal and bird species that live in the area and the area’s connection to the salmon. Weeks of preparation led to this point, with several classroom visits from staff of the Yakima Basin Environmental Education Program and regional biologist Will Moore.

Contract Loggers Presentation: Doug Wiedemeier gave a PowerPoint presentation at the Washington Contract Loggers Association training in Colville. His presentation focused on educating the contractors on examples of hydraulic work that they are likely to perform in connection with their operations. A visual quiz at the end of the presentation helped everyone to think about good versus poor end results. This yearly event is a good opportunity to reach out to many of the people doing work in the woods and educate them on HPAs and what WDFW would like to see done.

Fir Island Initiative: IRM, Enforcement, and Wildlife Program staffs continue to work with the Fir Island Wildlife Work Group. The group is developing a management plan for snow geese on Fir Island (Skagit Delta) that addresses resident safety, agricultural damage, hunter access, and snow geese biology. The group was formed as a result of the August 4, 2006, Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting where the Fir Island issue was discussed. After public meetings, the work group was formed and consists of residents, agricultural interests, hunters, tribal representatives, and bird watchers. The group is scheduled to bring a management plan back to the Commission by the end of June 2007.

Invasive Species Council: Environmental Policy Lead Bridget Moran, IRM, is chair of the Washington State Invasive Species Council. The Council’s first quarterly meeting of 2007 was productive. The 100th Meridian Initiative, the Western Regional Plant Board, and USDA/APHIS provided the final in a series of Critical Connection presentations. This was a continuation from last meeting’s presentations by the Ballast Water Work Group, the Aquatic Nuisance Species group, the Noxious Weed Control Board, and the Invasive Species Coalition. A prime directive for the Council is to provide coordination among groups working on invasive species issues; therefore, the Council began its work with briefings from these established organizations. The second item completed at the meeting was the establishment of work groups to begin the development of the Strategic Plan. The Council’s charge is to develop a statewide strategic plan that addresses prevention, detection, and response to the increasing number of harmful plant and animal species invading our state, resulting in damage to the environment and causing economic hardship. Internally, WDFW has formed an Invasive Species Work Group that facilitates information exchange across programs.

Columbia River Water Management Program: The Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP) Policy Advisory Group met March 1 to finalize a vision, mission, and goals statement; hear a presentation on a proposed project in the Yakima Basin; and discuss project funding criteria. The vision of the CRWMP is to “Preserve and enhance the standard of living for the people of Washington by strengthening the state’s economic condition and restoring and protecting the Columbia Basin’s unique natural environment.” The mission is to “Aggressively pursue development of water supplies to benefit both instream and out-of-stream water uses.”

The Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association presented a plan to provide new water right irrigation service to the Red Mountain and West Richland Area and within the Kennewick Irrigation District service territory. This project would, ultimately, add a much-needed ~400 cubic feet per second to the Yakima River at the Prosser Diversion by replacing most of that water, plus water from a new water right application, with water pumped directly from the Columbia River downstream of the Yakima River mouth. Mitigation water is needed to ensure there is no deficit in the mainstem Columbia from this project. The Association talked about the growing need for water in the Red Mountain area to serve not only irrigated agriculture (primarily grapes), but also new hobby farms and subdivisions. After answering questions on mechanics of the proposal, the group’s discussion included a healthy debate regarding the wisdom of supporting individual lifestyle choices (e.g., irrigated landscaping/lawns) with public funds and the concern that only a small proportion of the overall costs of the project would be borne by water users. In general, the group agreed that the project as described represents the type of project that was expected to come forth with this program, but also noted the difficulty of resolving the public benefit versus private benefit equation when considering project funding.

The Department of Ecology presented graphics depicting the locations of interruptible water rights that are affected by the program, as well as locations for the first 21 water right permit applications that would be processed under the program. These illustrations provided background for a discussion of Ecology’s procedures for processing water right applications and illustrated the need for Ecology to be able to match water-saving projects with water need (as represented by applications). Discussion ensued around a draft model for screening projects for funding under the program and how to ensure instream benefits are met, as well as out-of-stream benefits. The group also agreed that the project funding criteria should somehow ensure that projects proposed for funding do not conflict with plans developed by local watershed planning units. An Ecology work group has been formed (which includes representation from WDFW) to refine the project review process and develop materials in preparation for a first round of project solicitations. The work group will present its progress at an April 18 meeting, with a goal of a final grant package that is ready to implement by Summer 2007.

Healthy Lands Coalition: Mel Asher attended a Healthy Lands Coalition meeting in Chelan with a diverse group of farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, and other agency personnel. The interests of this group included sustainable development and the preservation of local farmers and ranchers. The group decided to organize under a pre-existing group, Institute for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS), rather than creating an additional organization. North-Central Washington Resource Conservation and Development (NCW RC&D) was chosen to lead this new initiative.

Purchasing Workgroup: A Purchasing Workgroup Committee was recently formed by the Executive Management Team (EMT) to review and make recommendations to the EMT for improving current purchasing business practices. Some objectives of this committee are to look at purchasing accountability within the department, to form and develop a Centralized Purchasing Office more involved with the purchase of goods and services, the implementation of the Purchasing Card program that will streamline our method of payment for goods and services and reduce processing costs, and to develop the necessary policies and procedures to address these changes.

Senate Chair Budgets: The Senate Chair’s Proposed Budgets, released on March 28, 2007, is summarized as follows. Please note that these budget items are still under review with the Business Services Program’s Assistant Director.

I - Operating Budget

The 2007 Operating Budget Comparison:

Funding	House	Senate Chair	Changes
GF-S	\$1,426,000	\$1,426,000	0
WF-S	459,500	459,500	0
Others	2,500,000	2,500,000	0
Total 2007 Proposed Budget	\$4,385,500	\$4,385,500	0

There was no change in funding among the Governor, the House, and the Senate Chair’s budget proposals; however, the Senate Chair budget did not provide the 1.0 FTE for 2006 Wildfire Season Costs as both the Governor and the House did.

The 07-09 BN Operating Budget Comparison:

Funding	House	Senate Chair	Changes
GF-S	\$100,857,000	\$101,984,000	\$1,127,000
WF-S	62,397,000	62,397,000	0
Others	167,045,000	167,193,000	148,000
Total 07-09 BN Proposed Budget	\$330,299,000	\$331,574,000	\$1,275,000

Notes of Interest:

- Both House and Senate Chair’s Fuel and Utility Rate funding was based on DOT’s November forecast.
- Both House and Senate’s Budget placed all utility funds into one agency item.
- Partial Restoration-SmartBuy, funded by the Governor and by the House, but was not funded by Senate Chair.
- Conversion to State Enterprise IT: the Senate Chair appropriated funding for this item into the Data Processing Revolving Fund for new IT project under joint control of OFM and DIS.
- Downtown Properties Relocation: \$110,000 funding provided by both House and Senate Chair is for cleanup only.
- Property Evidence Custodians: Agency requested 3 FTEs. Governor supported. House only funded 1 FTE. Senate did not fund, which will impact the Colville agreement project. However, left the proviso, directing agency, within funding provided to agency, to work with Confederated Tribes of the Colville, and the Spokane Tribe.
- Cooperative Grazing: Senate Chair did not fund in Operating Budget; but funded \$200K in Capital Budget.

Special Appropriations:

1. Both the Governor and the House budgets supported a transfer of \$4,000,000 GF-S into the state Wildlife Account to help out with this account fund balance. The Senate did not support the transfer; however, it provided as one-time funding, in FY 08, \$1,310,000 GF-S for “Engineering Program Backfill”, and \$1,190,000 GF-S for “HPA Permit Program Backfill”, currently supported with State Wildlife Account (SWA) to allow the Department time to address SWA shortfall issues.
2. The House required OFM to transfer \$1,000,000 GF-S into the Regional Enhancement Group Account. Appropriations are provided solely for expenditure into the Regional Enhancement Group Account. The Senate did not do this.

Employee Compensation:

1. Repeal of Gain-Sharing: Savings are assumed resulting from the replacement of gain-sharing benefits with an alternative package of retirement benefits.
2. Same for both Collective Bargaining Agreements and Non-Represented Employees:
 - Across the board salary increases of 3.2% salary increase effective 7/01/2007, and 2.0% effective 7/01/2008.
 - Continuation of 1.6% salary increase that was provided on 7/01/06.
 - Additional increases for employees who are compensated at less than 25% of market rates.
 - Employer contributions for health benefits equal to 88% of employee premium costs. Monthly contribution rates are \$707 per employee/month in FY 08, and \$732 in FY 09.

II - Capital Budget

The 2007 Supplemental Capital Budget Comparison:

Funding	House	Senate Chair	Changes
State Bldg Construct. Acct (057-1)	\$658,000	\$658,000	\$0
Total	\$658,000	\$658,000	\$0

There was no change between the House and the Senate Chair’s budget proposals.

The 07-09 BN Capital Budget Comparison:

Funding	House	Senate Chair	Changes
State Bldg Construct. Acct (057-1)	37,016,000	34,567,000	-2,449,000
GF-Federal/Local/Private (001)	26,500,000	30,000,000	3,500,000
Wildlife Account - State (104-1)	0	66,000	66,000
Other Funds	1,975,000	1,975,000	0
Projected Reappropriations (057-1/ 104-1)	7,916,000	9,637,000	1,721,000
Total	\$73,407,000	\$76,245,000	\$2,838,000

A- Reduced Budget Items:

Chambers Creek Adult Trap, Ph. 2 was reduced in the Senate budget by \$2,950,000 (057-1).

B- Added Budget Items:

The Senate Chair added the following items to the budget:

1. Puget Sound Initiative Nearshore Salmon Restoration: \$1,000,000 (001-2).

2. Wiley Slough Restoration: \$2,795,000 (057/001-2)
3. Bee Be Property: \$502,000 (057-1)
4. Grazing Monitoring on Fish and Wildlife Lands: \$200,000 (057-1)
5. Combined State Agency Aviation Facility: \$132,000 (057/104-1)

C- Not Funded Budget Items:

Issaquah Hatchery Gravity Intake Replacement: \$562,000 (057-1)

D- Reappropriation Funded Projects:

Title	Agency Revised	House	Senate	Senate vs. House
057 State Building Construction Account				
Hatchery Reform, Retrofits, and Condition Imp.	\$2,195,000	\$1,950,000	\$2,195,000	\$245,000
Facility, Infrastructure, Lands, Access Condition	1,937,000	883,000	1,937,000	1,054,000
Deschutes Watershed Center	255,000	582,000	582,000	0
Bee Be Property	380,000	196,000	380,000	184,000
Sustainability and Green Energy	360,000	118,000	360,000	242,000
Ranch Lands Irrigation	600,000	600,000	600,000	0
DNR Land Exchange – Shrub Steppe	250,000	235,000	250,000	15,000
Puget Sound Initiative – Nearshore Restoration	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	0
Sinlahekin Creek Dams – Flood Damage Repair	0	70,000	70,000	0
Region 1 Office – Complete Phase 1	0	588,000	588,000	0
Fish & Wildlife Opportunity Improvements	155,000	174,000	155,000	-19,000
104 Wildlife Fund State				
FW Population and Habitat Protection	200,000	20,000	20,000	0
Fish & Wildlife Opportunity Improvements	1,235,000	0	0	0
Total	\$10,067,000	\$7,916,000	\$9,637,000	\$1,721,000

Fiscal Notes: As of Thursday 03/29/07, WDFW received a total of 128 fiscal note requests from OFM; including 23 revised fiscal note requests. 125 fiscal notes were submitted, of which 101 were either early or on time, and 24 were late. For the week, we received 2 fiscal note requests and submitted 3 to OFM.

Bills of interest - Here is the status of bills of interest to WDFW due to their impact to the Wildlife Account reported earlier:

1. SB 5130, Hunting Access- DEAD
2. SB 5132/HB 1248, F&W Dept Funding- DEAD
3. HB 1076, Rockfish Research- Still Active in Senate Ways & Means Committee but no funding was provided in the Senate Chair Budget.
4. SB 6053, Food Fish & Shellfish, *an act relating to providing management authority over food fish and shellfish resources to the director of fish and wildlife* – Still Active in House Committee on Agricultural and Natural Resources – Executive action has taken by the committee.

SCIENCE GOAL:

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOUND AND OBJECTIVE SCIENCE TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Avian Influenza Update: From July 14, 2006 through March 14, 2007, WDFW submitted 973 live surveillance swabs, 817 hunter-harvested swabs, 150 fecal samples, and 101 morbidity/mortality swabs for avian influenza (AI) testing. Swabs were collected from 20 avian species throughout the state of Washington. In addition, 56 avian carcasses have been submitted for post-mortem examinations.

As of March 14, 2007, lab results for 1,143 swab samples have been received. To date, 7 samples from mallard ducks have tested positive for an H5 strain of AI virus. There have not been any virus isolations of H7 or N1 subtypes of AI virus. The National Wildlife Health Center has reported that an additional 24 mallards, 5 cackling geese, 2 dunlin, and 1 western sandpiper have tested positive for AI viruses that were not of the H5, H7, or N1 subtypes.

WDFW's First Chinook Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNPS): The WDFW Molecular Genetics Lab has recently discovered 17 assayable SNPs. To do this we first sequenced eight fragments of chinook DNA from our chinook genomic library, then compared these sequences in 46 chinook samples. We found 19 SNPs scattered among the eight sequences this way. SNPs are of limited use, however, unless straightforward assays for them can be developed. To investigate this, we uploaded the SNP-containing sequences to Applied Biosystems Incorporated (ABI), and ABI determined that assays can be developed for 17 of the SNPs. ABI will develop these assays. This work is important because these SNPs will be used in the future for lower cost and faster genetic analysis of chinook fisheries.

Shared Strategy – Stream Flow Committee: IRM and Habitat Science Division staff continue to participate in work of the Shared Strategy stream flow subcommittee. We have been tasked with development of a science strategy to better establish the relationship between stream flow enhancement and Puget Sound salmon recovery goals. Currently, the committee is working to put together a blue ribbon science panel to further explore this relationship and develop recommendations at a two-day workshop being planned for July. In addition, the committee is proposing an expanded fall workshop to deal specifically with the establishment of watershed specific flow protection and enhancement programs (PEPS) as specified in the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan.

Manuscript About Hatchery Domestication Accepted for Publication: The Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences has just accepted a manuscript written by three Science Division members titled “The Effects of Domestication on the Relative Vulnerability of Hatchery and Wild Origin Spring Chinook Salmon to Predation.” The manuscript, by Anthony Fritts, Jennifer Scott, and Todd Pearsons, reports on the early effects of domestication selection on the predation vulnerability of supplemented Yakima River spring chinook salmon. The results showed that the progeny of hatchery-origin fish survived at a two percent lower rate than the progeny of natural-origin fish.

EMPLOYEE GOAL:

CREATE AN AGENCY ENVIRONMENT THAT NURTURES PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY, ENTHUSIASM, AND DEDICATION IN ORDER TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN A WORKFORCE THAT CAN SUCCESSFULLY CARRY OUT THE MANDATE OF THE AGENCY.

Fish Management Division Manager Announcement: The Fish Program AD and DAD announced the appointment of Craig Burley (formerly the Regional Fish Program Manager for Region 5) to the position of Fish Management Division Manager for Inland, Warmwater, and Marine Fish/Shellfish; and announced the appointment of Heather Bartlett to the Fish Management Division Manager for Salmon and Steelhead. They began their new opportunities on April 1, 2007. A special thank you to Paul Seidel who had filled in as Acting Division Manager in the interim.

Classroom Presentation: On Tuesday, February 27, 2007, Shellfish biologist Dan Ayres joined Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officer Jerry Zimmerman in making a series of presentations to the entire freshman class at Elma High School. The school is using a series of seminars to highlight various careers, giving these young students a vision for their own futures. At the end of the day, the classroom instructors complimented Dan and Jerry saying their presentations were the best so far this school year. Of course, Officer Zimmerman, based in Elma, was already familiar to many of these rural students who are already active hunters or fishers.

Public Access Site Staffing Appointments: Three individuals have been appointed to fill recent vacancies in the Public Access Site Program. Jorge Garcia has been appointed to the position of Region 3 Access Manager. Jorge has been working as a crew supervisor in the Washington Conservation Corps in Okanogan County. Kevin Vaillancourt has been appointed to the position of Access Supervisor for Region 2 - South. Kevin has also worked in the Washington Conservation Corps and has most recently been with WDFW's Fish Program. Tyler Dunbar has been appointed to fill the Region 6 Access Maintenance Laborer position. Welcome aboard Jorge, Kevin, and Tyler.

Spotted Owl Conservation: Joe Buchanan, Ann Potter, and Lori Salzer spent extensive time sorting, selecting, and preparing spotted owl file material for the spotted owl lawsuit at the request of the Office of the Attorney General (AG). New requests from the AG continue to come in weekly.

Joe Buchanan attended the third annual "Workshop for federal biologists on the science of the Northern Spotted Owl," held in Portland, Oregon. Joe gave a presentation entitled: "*A synopsis of suggested approaches to address potential competitive interactions between Barred Owls and Spotted Owls.*"

Joe also participated in a conference call with other members of the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team. The purpose of the conference call was to finalize a document that will be submitted to the provincial government and used, in part, to perform action planning for the species. The spotted owl in British Columbia appears to be on the verge of extirpation.

Soroptimist – Port Angeles Jet Set Chapter: The local Port Angeles Jet Set Chapter Soroptimists awarded District Biologist Anita McMillan with the 2006-2007 Women of Distinction Award for the Environment. They acknowledged her work from peregrine falcon surveys to habitat conservation efforts such as the Morse Creek habitat and interpretive center accomplishments. Congratulations Anita!

Enforcement Program In-Service: Enforcement Program’s annual in-service training was held in Wenatchee the first two weeks in March. Half of our officers attended the first week and the other half completed the training the second week. Training/agenda items included: Search Warrants; Tribal Hunting and Fishing Enforcement; Asset Forfeitures; License Suspensions; WDFW Infractions; RCW 77 Resident/Non-Resident; Sanitary Shellfish; Joint Enforcement Agreements (JEA); EVOC Refresher; Investigations; EARS & HPMS; X Map; Sexual Harassment; Ethics Law and Labor Contracts Review; and Dealing with the Mentally Ill. This mandatory annual training also accomplished gas mask fittings, repairing/upgrading equipment, and other important tasks.

Fallen Law Enforcement Comrade: Regions 4 and 6 Officers attended the law enforcement funeral for US Forest Service (USFS) Enforcement Agent Shane Wyrsh of the White River District after he was tragically killed in a car accident. Shane was involved in a head-on collision, off duty on HWY 410 near Buckley, with a suspected drunk driver. Shane worked for the USFS for 16 years and during that period worked with and alongside many of our officers and others in law enforcement. Our officers clearly recognized him as a law enforcement professional, friend, and partner that could always be counted on. Shane was married with two young sons, ages 3 and 5.

