

# **Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission**

## **August 4-5, 2006**

### *“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***

###### **Stakeholder Participation in the Development of the Puget Sound Steelhead**

**Resource Management Plan (RMP):** WDFW is in the early stages of developing a steelhead hatchery, harvest and monitoring plan for Puget Sound steelhead in response to NOAA Fisheries' proposed Puget Sound steelhead listing. This plan will be a component of a broader statewide steelhead RMP. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on both the statewide and Puget Sound component of the steelhead RMP during monthly meetings throughout the summer and fall. The first stakeholder meeting was an informal ad hoc group of Steelhead and Cutthroat Policy Advisory Committee (SCPAG) members that occurred on July 20. Presentations were given by representatives from the Wild Steelhead Coalition, Puget Sound Anglers, and Washington Trout to name a few. WDFW staff received feedback on current steelhead hatchery practices, harvest management, and research needs that will be incorporated in the development the Puget Sound RMP. SCPAG members were also interested in reaching out to a broader group of local entities including city and county governments working on salmon conservation efforts. Participation from these groups is key to the success of WDFW's steelhead plan and we look forward to their input. The next public meeting will be scheduled in late August 2006.

**Cedar River Trout Population and Fishery Monitoring Study:** Fish Program and collaborators from King County, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries recently initiated a Cedar River research study to determine: 1) the trout population dynamics; 2) the diet composition of the trout population; and 3) the catch-per-unit effort estimate for the summer catch-and-release trout fishery between Landsburg Dam and Lake Washington. Region 4 technicians are floating the river to provide effort counts and interview anglers to estimate catch rate. Last Friday, Science Division and Region 4 staff members successfully tested a new tote-barge electrofishing unit to estimate the summer abundance and size structure of the trout population in the Cedar River downstream of Landsburg Dam. Mark-recapture experiments at six index sites will be performed with the barge unit during the second half of July in order to estimate trout abundance, identify diet composition, collect genetics samples, and PIT tag trout to detect movement patterns.

**Southern distinct population segment (DPS) of green sturgeon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act:** NOAA Fisheries issued a Final Rule listing the Southern distinct population segment (DPS) of green sturgeon as threatened, effective July 6, 2006. The latest genetic analysis identified that the Southern DPS comprised 50%-80% of green sturgeon sampled from Washington's coastal estuaries in 2003-2005. Impacts to listed green sturgeon from Columbia River fisheries require ESA Section 7 consultation. Region 5 staff have drafted a Supplemental Biological Assessment (BA) covering impacts to listed green sturgeon from lower Columbia River fisheries for TAC review and submission to NOAA Fisheries. In discussions with NOAA Fisheries staff, it was indicated that justification for a "no jeopardy" opinion for listed green sturgeon would be more straightforward with implementation of non-retention fisheries. The draft BA states that retention of green sturgeon will be disallowed in commercial fisheries beginning in July 2006 and in recreational fisheries beginning in 2007, allowing the states the opportunity to educate anglers on the difference between green and white sturgeon. In anticipation of further harvest prohibitions, a Sportfishing Rule proposal prohibiting retention of green sturgeon statewide has been prepared for inclusion in the 2007-2008 minor-year rule cycle. NOAA Fisheries will be determining specific ESA Section 9 prohibitions and exemptions over the next several months through the ESA 4(d) process. Impacts from fisheries outside the Columbia River will be addressed through this consultation process.

**Integrating the H's:** Region 4 Fish Management staff attended the two-day all H's Integration Workshop in Edmonds. A variety of participants were involved from department staff representing Fish Management, Hatcheries, and Habitat; to Tribal staff representing harvest and habitat; NOAA Fisheries, local governments, and Non Government Organizations. Director Koenings provided opening remarks. The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for this diverse group with the common goal on salmon restoration to come together with the hope of finding a shared language by which to communicate and work together for the future.

**Wildlife Area (WLA) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Status Update:** Initial (first cut) species inventories for the Sinlahekin, Methow, and Scotch Creek Wildlife Areas are nearly complete. These initial inventories have been compiled from existing data sources. The next steps for the refinement of the inventories include the assessment of data quality, gaps, and future data needs, as well as review by appropriate District Teams and Wildlife Area Managers. By the end of August, we expect to begin the development of a database that will house the inventories and link them spatially with concurrent mapping efforts.

**Pollution Fines Finance Restoration and Conservation Projects in Puget Sound:** The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Puget Sound Marine Conservation Fund has allocated \$1.7 million to fund 14 marine conservation and restoration projects in Puget Sound. The money for these projects came from oil pollution penalties levied against a large shipping company. Natural Resource Damage Assessment/Restoration staff from the WDFW Spill Team participated on the screening committee to evaluate and prioritize project proposals. Many of the selected projects are expected to benefit and support the State's nearshore, estuarine and salmon restoration priorities in Puget Sound.

**Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Plan:** Edd Bracken, Ted Clausing, Cindi Confer, and Mel Asher attended the July CRM meeting. The primary topic of discussion remains the condition of existing springs and water developments, and the preparation of a cost estimate to repair/upgrade them. Edd gave a PowerPoint presentation showing the current condition of 18 springs and 6 impoundments on the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. Robert Kruse, a CRM participant and owner of a construction company has volunteered to take the lead in developing cost estimates for the repair work based on Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) guidelines. Robert's preliminary estimate for just the water developments on the wildlife area is approximately \$100,000. Several ranchers expressed frustration with what they perceive as a slow pace in addressing the water and fencing issues. Mel Asher continued assisting NRCS staff with the range inventory. To date, about 16,000 acres have been inventoried, with most of that acreage inside the wildlife area boundary.

**Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB):** The Salmon Recovery Funding Board met in Walla Walla to distribute \$17 million for the current (2006) round of grants. The Board approved regional allocation percentages as follows:

- Lower Columbia Region 15%
- Puget Sound Region 45%
- Mid-Columbia Region 10%
- Upper Columbia Region 11%
- Snake Region 9%
- Northeast Region 2%
- Coastal Region 8%

These percentages are only for this funding cycle. SRFB staff, lead entities, and regional staff are developing criteria in which allocations would be divided within each region. This proposal will be presented to the SRFB in September. Lead entities (northeast and coast) not considered within a formal recovery region will request additional funding from the SRFB in September. This funding will help facilitate discussions toward development of a regional recovery plan for the coast and northeast regions. Staff participated in several meetings for the two separate regions with their respective local representatives, lead entities, WDFW, SRFB staff and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to discuss the process of regionalization.

**Lead Entity Operational Grants:** A new employee, Theresa Mitchell, has been hired as the Lead Entity - Watershed Steward Assistant (Environmental Specialist 2). Her position will be shared with the IRM Program's Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program.

**Oil Recovery Plan for S.S. Catala:** Oil Spill Team members met with representatives of Ecology, U.S. Coast Guard, Dept. of Natural Resources, State Parks and WDFW Region 6 to discuss the proposed salvage plan for the wreck of the vessel Catala on Damon Point in Grays Harbor. The group reviewed and approved the plan developed by Global Diving and Salvage for removing the oil and asbestos on board the vessel. Permitting issues were discussed and commencement of salvage operations was tentatively scheduled to begin August 1.

**DOE Oil Spill Contingency Plan Rules:** Oil Spill Team members reviewed and prepared comments on Ecology’s proposed rules for vessel and facility oil spill contingency plans. Ecology developed the rules after a lengthy dialogue with oil industry and environmental stakeholders. Compared to the existing rules, the proposed rules provide significant improvements for the protection of fish and wildlife.

**Marine Energy Projects:** With the recent six filings for projects by Snohomish Public Utility District, there are now 11 marine energy projects being proposed in Washington State. The design of these projects vary, but the concept for most of them is to take wind turbines and place them underwater to use the energy from tidal currents to generate electricity. The current proposals have rotor blades that range from 9 to 60 feet in diameter. The proposal for the Tacoma Narrows would result in tip speeds over 20 miles per hour. Applications for projects have been submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the following projects:

San Juan Channel	116 turbines (60 foot rotors)
Guemes Channel	166 turbines (30 foot rotors)
Admiralty Inlet	1,010 turbines
Agate Pass	130 turbines (9 foot rotors)
Spienden Channel	168 turbines
Rich Passage	62 turbines (30 foot rotors)
Tacoma Narrows	60 turbines (60 foot rotors)
Deception Pass	4-20 turbines (30-60 foot rotors) (Snohomish County PUD)
	100-300 turbines (Washington Tidal Energy)
Columbia River	50-150 turbines (25-50 foot rotors)
Makah Bay	A wave energy project, using buoys to pump water through a turbine

The impacts of these types of project are unknown because very few of these projects exist anywhere in the world. We will be designing studies to look at the impacts to fish, birds, marine mammals, and their habitats. Potential impacts involve direct mortality on birds, fish and marine mammals from turbine blade strikes, interference with migratory patterns, measures to protect equipment from marine growth, direct habitat loss from equipment and infrastructure placement, impacts on currents, changes in water surface elevations, effects on commercial and recreational fishing areas and equipment, changes in sediment transport, and other issues not yet identified.

**Outer Continental Shelf Energy Rules:** Staff provided comments on the development of rules for energy projects located on the outer continental shelf off the coast of Washington. The Mineral Management Service, U.S. Department of Interior, is developing the rules. It is uncertain whether the rules for developing these types of projects (wind mills, marine energy, solar, and hydrogen) will be similar to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rules for developing hydroelectric projects. We requested that impact to fish and wildlife resources be addressed, and that recommendations from state fish and wildlife agencies be given special consideration.

**Avista Spokane River Project Relicensing:** Recommendations for terms and conditions for the new license were filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Protection, mitigation and enhancement measures focused on wild and native trout habitat improvements including large woody debris, spawning gravel, and flow management. Recreational fishing enhancements included providing funds for improving the trout fishery in Lake Spokane. Wildlife habitat protection requests amounted to nearly 2000 acres of riparian and upland habitat as well as an additional 300 acres of wetland habitat. Other measures focused on controlling or managing Eurasian watermilfoil, sedimentation, and erosion. Our measures were developed with assistance from the Regional staff as well as the Major Projects Division in Olympia.

**Western Energy Corridors:** Staff provided comments to the U.S. Department of Energy regarding a proposal for establishing energy corridors through Washington. It has been reported that corridors may be up to 4,000 feet wide. We requested detailed information about the location of the proposed corridors, protection for fish and wildlife, and mitigation for fish and wildlife impacts.

**Wild Horse Wind Power Project:** There are unanticipated impacts of underground cable installations at the Wild Horse Wind Power Project. The “Application for Site Certification” and Environmental Impact Statement for the Wild Horse Wind Power Project had the underground cables in a swath 6-feet wide parallel and immediately adjacent to the road. However, a disturbance footprint for a single run of cable is approximately 30-50 feet wide, not 6-feet wide. When multiple circuits are installed parallel to each other, cable trenches must be spaced 20 feet apart due to concerns associated with heat dissipation, thereby creating a much wider footprint. Where seven parallel cable trenches converge, the clearing limits approach 200 feet wide in some of the most sensitive habitat at the site. Staff is meeting with contractors to assess whether there are ways to mitigate underground cable construction impacts during construction and whether we can improve restoration of the site. There is a need to begin internal discussions with WDFW Habitat Program administration and Major Projects staff regarding the assumptions of the Wind Power Guidelines, particularly with regard to the definition of “temporary impacts.”

**Roadless Rule:** Environmental Policy is tracking the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Roadless Rule issue. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, promulgated during the Clinton presidency, prevented road building and timber harvest on 58 million acres of USFS inventoried roadless areas and was reversed in a 2005 Rule. The 2005 rule removes the roadless provisions and provides a mechanism for states to petition the USFS for state-specific rule making for roadless areas within their states. In Washington, this rule affects over 2 million acres of national forest lands. Washington is pursuing two fronts on this issue, both the formal petition route and a lawsuit challenging the 2005 rule. The Governor’s Office is leading the development of Washington’s petition (due November 2006), which will likely mirror the 2001 rule, with some changes. On the legal front, Washington joined a lawsuit that includes California, Oregon, and New Mexico alleging failure to follow the National Environmental Protection Act and the Administrative Procedures Act. Hearings are set in the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco on August 1, 2006.

**Citizen Science with Audubon and State Parks:** Staff helped develop and initiate a Citizen Science monitoring project at Fort Simcoe State Park in cooperation with the local Audubon chapter. They are surveying nesting Lewis' woodpeckers and monitoring nest cavities for competition from starlings for the unique habitats provided by the large Oregon white oaks on the park grounds. It has been very successful in this first year of the project.

**Columbia River Hydrosystem:** The extremely warm weather in the Northwest has resulted in the need for several emergency meetings to discuss operation of the hydro system. There was concern early the week of July 24 for a potential power emergency (that did not materialize) and may have required reductions in fish protection measures. Several meetings were held to discuss the operation of Dworshak Reservoir in the Snake River basin. Water temperature at Lower Granite Dam has been hovering just below the water quality standard of 68 degrees for several weeks. The week of July 24 the standard was exceeded. However, the availability of additional cool water from Dworshak to help cool down the river is dwindling. The salmon managers (state, tribal, and federal) will be tasked with making some hard decisions on when to use the water and which fish stocks to support the most. This will continue to be a topic of discussion in the up and coming weeks.

**Significant Poach and Theft Ring:** Officer Myers and Officer Nelson succeeded in solving a deer and elk poaching investigation in Asotin County. The case involved two suspects who spotlighted and poached a deer in the Cloverland area on May 29. The suspects were booked into jail on warrants on July 17 in Columbia County after a traffic stop. Officers Myers and Nelson responded to the jail to interview them. During this investigation the officers discovered that one of the suspects also poached a cow elk in the Anatone area on the same day. Through extensive interviews and leads it appears that the Officers stumbled into a significant poaching and theft ring. Officers are charging two suspects with counts including felony possession of firearms, spotlighting, closed season elk and deer kills, trespassing, wastage, reckless endangerment, possession of wildlife parts, etc. Our Officers also will be referring charges of theft to the US Forest Service and more deer poaching to Idaho Fish and Game.

**Clallam Straits Detachment Aids Injured Bear:** Officers Fairbanks, Anderson and Messenger responded to a call for service on Sunday night of a bear that had been caught in a leg-hold trap. With the assistance of a local veterinarian, they were able to immobilize and evaluate the extent of the bear's injuries. Despite the trap being unpadded with teeth, the bear was relatively unhurt. It was transported to a safe location in the National Forest and released. A follow-up investigation will resume in an attempt to catch the individual who is responsible for the trap.

**Non-Compliance Crab Issue:** Officer Clementson continues to pull closed season crab gear in Marine Area 8-2. To date, over 200 sports pots have been pulled. Officers from Detachments 1, 13, 12, 11, and 10 continue to monitor the crab landings at Coronet Bay and Everett. Complete compliance (i.e., no violations of any kind) runs at roughly 50 percent. Results from the completed Operation Megalopmania showed over 750 contacts with individuals crabbing, and 376 violations for that 9-day emphasis patrol.

### **Search Warrant Activity:**

- Antelope Fawn Held Captive in Tacoma - Officer Maschhoff, Officer Prater, Sergeant Jackson, and a USFWS special gent executed a search warrant in Tacoma. The man that is living at the residence had picked up an antelope in South Dakota last month and was keeping it as a pet. After picking up the antelope the man continued on his road trip to Florida and then returned to Washington toting the antelope all the way. The man showed the officers where he was keeping the antelope and was willing to talk with the officers about the incident but, when it came time to giving a written statement the man said he had already told the officers everything he knew and didn't need to write it down. The man was adamant that he had picked up the antelope in Spokane the week before. In witness statements Officer Maschhoff had already learned that the man had called his girlfriend from South Dakota to ask what to feed a baby antelope because he was going to Wal-Mart to get it food. The officers took the antelope to the Pilchuck Wildlife Center on Camano Island for safekeeping. State charges have already been filed and federal charges will be filed once the antelope's true origin can be determined (via blood samples and cell phone records).
- Eagle Parts and Human Skulls - Acting on information from an informant, Officer Vandivert obtained two search warrants for an Orcas Island estate. Sgt. Mullins assisted by helping obtain a property description and by coordinating service of the warrants. The warrants were for a single residence, and a 200-acre estate with nine homes. The estate is owned by a multi-millionaire, who is also the prime suspect in the shooting of four bald eagles within the past few weeks and numerous deer throughout the year. About 15 WDFW Officers/Sgt/Captain, a WDFW detective and three federal agents were involved in contacting multiple suspects and witnesses, and in searching the property. Eagle parts, firearms and two human skulls were seized in the search. There is still a lot of follow up work to be done, including having the evidence submitted to the Ashland Crime Lab for analysis.

**Large Stolen Shrimp Gear Operation:** Sgt. Mullins assisted Officer Lee and Officer Vandivert with a shrimp pot theft, shrimp overlimit case in the Conway area. The suspect was found to be in possession of eleven stolen shrimp pots belonging to at least five victims. In addition, the suspect had over 1,350 fresh shrimp inside a cooler in the back of his pickup truck. These shrimp were the result of a three-day poaching spree in the San Juan Islands where he fished three to four stolen pots. He even attached his own buoy setups to the stolen gear. The stolen shrimp gear, including marked buoys, was recovered from the suspect's vessel and residence. After Officers interviewed the suspect, he confessed to taking and fishing other people's gear over a two-week period, personally harvesting the extreme overlimit, and fishing excess gear. Numerous charges will be referred to San Juan County Prosecutor's Office. All of the gear was recovered and will be returned to the victims.

**Alligator Captured in Buckley:** Officer Maschhoff responded to a call for service from Buckley Police Department (PD) regarding an alligator in a drainage pond. The PD requested a wildlife officer because they did not know how to deal with the animal. When Officer Maschhoff arrived he actually found a crocodile poking its nose out of a drainpipe that drained the seasonal retention pond. Officer Maschhoff tried to catch the animal with his catchpole but it just backed into the pipe. He then looped his catchpole into the end of the pipe and waited patiently until the croc started to come back out of the pipe. Buckley PD Officers assisted in trying to scare the croc out of the pipe from the other end. When the croc started to come out again Officer Maschhoff waited until its head and front legs were through the loop and then captured the animal. Buckley PD then took possession of the animal and turned it over to Pierce County animal control.

**Marine Division and Region Six Officers Seize Over 5,000 Pounds of “Dirty Clams”:** Officers Langbehn and Anderson conducted an inspection of a shellfish company in Nordland on Thursday. The company has a long history of shellfish violations and is the source of numerous allegations of trafficking in dirty clams. When the officers arrived at the business, they observed several bags of clams and oysters laying on the beach in wet storage. Contacting the plant manager and some of the employees inside the processing building, the Officers quickly determined several violations of the Washington Department of Health (DOH) rules regarding commercial shellfish, including: shellfish bags did not contain certification tags or they were improperly marked, and shellstock lots in the processing plant were being commingled with other clams of unknown origin. The complexity and magnitude of the violations prompted Officer Anderson to call Sergeant Henry as well as DOH. The DOH responded immediately by having one of their investigators, Frank Cox, travel from Olympia to the site. Their extreme interest in the violation was precipitated by an “illness investigation” that Mr. Cox was conducting on that particular shellfish company. Apparently, cases of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* had been traced back to that buyer, but the specific harvest location couldn’t be determined. A few hours later, the Department of Health representative arrived and met the WDFW Officers. An assessment of the criminal and civil violations included untagged bags of manila clams; improperly tagged bags; improper fish tickets; commingled stock in the processing plant; dogs roaming throughout the processing plant; birds nesting above the shellstock; and mold growing on the walls and floor. The absence of proper labels on the shellstock (WAC 246-282-080.2) constituted a violation of the NSSP Model Ordinance and RCW 69.30.110. At the concurrence of DOH staff in Olympia, Sergeant Henry and the Officers initially seized the illegal stock, and began loading it into their patrol trucks. A total of 152 bags of manila clams amounting to 5,125 pounds (approx. \$7,688 value) were documented and seized. The DOH reconsidered the removal and destruction of the stock from the property and instead placed a hold order on the product, leaving it at the scene. WDFW Officers are uncomfortable with this result, but ultimately DOH has the last word on the disposition of the shellfish. Despite the disagreement with disposition of the shellfish, the violation of the shellfish buyer still remains. Officers Anderson and Langbehn began the tabulation of the offenses and determination of the charges. Detective Golden of the WDFW Statewide Investigative Unit is assisting with search warrants.

## **Elk Damage Permit Update**

### **Hanford Area**

**Elk Area 3721 Corral Canyon:** 14 landowners have harvested 9 bull elk to date. Summer permits expired July 31. The same 14 landowners received the pool of 50 spike or antlerless elk permits that started August 1 and expire March 31, 2007. Crop insurance adjuster, Steve VanTassel flew the Rattlesnake slope area on July 20 to conduct an aerial survey of elk damage. He only observed 10 elk near Bud Hamilton's Ranch and reports initial elk damage assessments to wheat fields appear to be down from last year.

**Elk Area 3722 Black Rock:** 5 landowners each received 7 any elk permits, 3 spike or antlerless elk permits and 12 antlerless elk permits. Permits started August 1 and expire March 31, 2007. Meetings have been scheduled with the 5 major landowners in the Black Rock Elk Area to begin discussions about Private Hunting Program contracts for the 2007-08 seasons.

### **Parke Creek Area**

**Elk Area 3911:** AHE seasons opened August 1 and will continue through January 2007.

#### **Parke Creek Damage Control Pilot Project**

**Venture Farms:** Harland Radomske refuses to sign the Director's Contract. Sergeant Sprecher spoke to Mr. Radomske on July 25 and Radomske is not going to sign the contract. His problem with the contract is the hold harmless boilerplate language that is standard in WDFW contracts. We reworked language with Attorney General assistance but he still refuses to sign. We are currently working with other Parke Creek landowners on contracts for damage prevention permits that do not require a waiver of damage. Currently the elk do not appear to be present and no landowners in the Parke Creek area are currently having elk damage. One landowner, a mile Northwest of Parke Creek, said he would sign the Directors Parke Creek Elk Damage Pilot contract. Mick Cope advised the landowner would receive the contract the first week in August. Several other landowners in Parke Creek have been contacted by Sergeant Sprecher and are interested in the Pilot contract.

Captain Kohls issued 5 antlerless elk only permits to each of three landowners in the Cle-Elum area (GMU 335) that are having current elk damage to Timothy Hay and Oats. Each landowner agreed to wave damage. Permits start August 1 and expire September 30, 2006.

Region Three Enforcement's Program has been working with the local agricultural community to implement a pilot project addressing wildlife depredation on commercial crops. WDFW's enforcement personnel, biologists, Kittitas Big Game Management Roundtable, Central Washington University, County Extension, local legislators and the agricultural community are identifying both short and long term solutions to the growing problems of wildlife/ human conflicts. Two deer and elk Wildlife Conflict Specialist positions will be hired by September 1, 2006 to work with landowners to prevent or control deer and elk damage on private lands. Ten qualified applicants have applied for the Control Specialist positions and interviews will be conducted during mid-August.

## **PUBLIC GOAL:**

### ***ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT***

**Lake Washington Sockeye Fishery:** A recreational fishery for sockeye occurred in Lake Washington on July 29-31. Since a fishery was unanticipated, Headquarters Fish Program staff scrambled to put together a full fishery-sampling program that required approximately 25 staff for each of the three days of fishing. A mixture of primarily permanent and some temporary staff were utilized to sample the fishery using protocols established in the 2004 fishery.

Anglers had two more days to fish for sockeye salmon in Lake Washington on August 2-3. State and tribal salmon co-managers have updated the size of the Lake Washington sockeye run to about 466,000 salmon. As of July 30, the sockeye count through the Ballard Locks totaled 412,730 fish. The new sockeye projection, which includes expected returns through August, is well above the spawning escapement goal of 350,000 salmon.

**Cowlitz Steelhead Run:** The summer steelhead run returning to the Cowlitz River is the largest in recent years. As a result WDFW increased the daily bag limit from two to three steelhead. The summer steelhead fishery on the Cowlitz is one of the most popular fisheries in the state and we are pleased to be available to provide additional opportunity. The reason for the fisheries popularity is the time of year when it occurs: it peaks in July and August and is one of the longest duration fisheries extending from May through October.

**Merwin "Special Kids" Fishing Event:** Once again the Merwin Hatcheries "Special Kids" Day was a great success. About 100 special needs children participated, along with their families, in the 8<sup>th</sup> annual event. We had a great group of volunteers attend and they provided help with one on one coaching, fish cleaning, lunch preparation and fishing pole repair. The weather was great and the fish were awesome, many in the five-pound class and a few tipping the scales at nine-pounds! Children participating were able to catch their five fish to take home and also got to keep their fishing pole and tackle box for future fishing. Many thanks to the hatchery staff that participated and all the folks from Olympia that made the trek southward: Bonnie Long, James Chandler, Monique Homan, and Terry Rudnick. And thanks to the folks from GPO and WHEIA.

**White Sturgeon Hatchery Production at CBH:** Region 1 and Region 3 staff collected and spawned two female and two male Lake Roosevelt sturgeon on the evening of June 29, creating four "family groups" consisting of 15,000 eggs per family. This is the first time that WDFW has attempted to capture sturgeon broodstock and spawn the fish ourselves. In previous years, we obtained fertilized eggs from British Columbia. The fertilized eggs were immediately transported to Columbia Basin Hatchery (CBH), Priest Rapids Complex, in Moses Lake where the U.S. component of the Upper Columbia River sturgeon recovery program's hatchery production is conducted. The eggs from female #1 (Family 1 & 2) were not in good condition and fertilization was poor. Most of these eggs died, became fungused and consequently were discarded on July 4. The remaining families from female #2 (Family 3 & 4) are doing very well and are starting to hatch. These eggs were in better condition and fertilization success was much higher. CBH staff is hopeful that good survival continues so that they will be able to produce the production objective of 4,000 juveniles (2,000 per female family) by next spring when they will range from about 10 - 14 inches in length and be ready to stock back into Lake Roosevelt.

## Update on Dungeness Crab Creek Study: Week 3

Table 1. Comparison of creel census results at Everett and Cornet Ramps during the first three weeks of the Dungeness crab fishery in 2006 (July 1 through 15) versus 2005 (July 1 through 17)

Week / Site		2006 Preliminary Raw Field Data				2005 Finalized Data			
		# Interviews	# Crabbers	Total # D. Crab	CPUE (D. Crab catch per crabber)	# Interviews	# Crabbers	Total # D. Crab	CPUE (D. Crab catch per crabber)
Opening Weekend (July 1 & 2)	Cornet Ramp	364	1,030	2,053	2.0	393	1,073	2,284	2.1
	Everett Ramp	855	2,417	6,353	2.6	784	2,175	6,993	3.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>8,406</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>3,248</b>	<b>9,277</b>	<b>2.9</b>
Week 2	Cornet Ramp	365	957	1,876	2.0	335	819	1,932	2.4
	Everett Ramp	586	1,426	4,192	2.9	513	1,306	4,411	3.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>6,068</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Week 3	Cornet Ramp	243	628	1,060	1.7	273	686	1,664	2.4
	Everett Ramp	781	1,230	3,476	2.8	571	1,440	4,793	3.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>4,536</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>2,126</b>	<b>6,457</b>	<b>3.0</b>
TOTAL (3 weeks)	Cornet Ramp	972	2,615	4,989	1.9	1,001	2,578	5,880	2.3
	Everett Ramp	2,222	5,073	14,021	2.8	1,868	4,921	16,197	3.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,194</b>	<b>7,688</b>	<b>19,010</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2,869</b>	<b>7,499</b>	<b>22,077</b>	<b>2.9</b>

**Park and Blue Lake Rehabilitation Meeting:** Region 2 staff will be hosting a public meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the rehabilitation of Park and Blue Lakes. Park and Blue Lake have been two of the premier eastside put-and-take trout fisheries. Last spring we had good angler effort but catches were near or below one fish per angler. The rehabilitations are critical steps in bringing these lakes back to their potential "premier" status and maintaining a high level of angler interest.

**Upper Klickitat Opened for Sport Fishing for the Retention of Adult Hatchery Spring Chinook:** Starting July 1 anglers will be able to retain adult hatchery spring Chinook in the upper Klickitat River. The decision to open this area was reached after it became clear that the Klickitat Salmon Hatchery would reach its escapement goal of 500 spring Chinook. This area of the Klickitat River is one of the few places in the state where anglers can fish for spring Chinook salmon in a glacier-fed white-water stream. It offers excellent drift boat fishing in a remote setting. Public interest in this fishery is high.

**Operation Dark Goose:** Region 5 Wildlife Program staff report that the Lower Columbia River capture of dark resident geese took place on July 7, 2006. This project is designed to mark as many local geese that resemble the dusky subspecies as possible. The project is designed to improve population estimates of the dusky subspecies as well as improve check station operations during the hunting season. Over 30 volunteers from Oregon State University, WDFW, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and private citizens contributed to the project. A total of 150 geese were caught and released with a variety of markers such as neck collars, tarsus bands, and federal leg bands. These birds can be recognized from others by the white collar or tarsus bands or by the unique leg band series.

**GoHunt Internet Mapping Application (Maintenance):** An extensive redesign of the Private Hunting Lands Opportunity (PLHO) database is currently underway. In the future, PLHO data will be entered into a Microsoft Access database, using data entry forms that have links to contract information already contained in the CAPS contract management system. Once implemented, this new data management process will streamline and automate the process of PLHO data entry, validation, and posting into the GoHunt Internet mapping application.

**Blue Mountains Elk Fence:** The Office of Financial Management (OFM) has verbally approved \$219,000 of \$500,000 that WDFW had proposed to reprogram in the current capital budget to continue work on the elk fence destroyed in the School Fire. WDFW is planning to put the fence project out to bid in the next few weeks and will hopefully be able to complete the portion of the fence that has been started. There remains a huge gap between available funds and the amount of fence needed to be repaired/rebuilt. That amount will be included in WDFW's 2007-09 capital budget request.

**2006 Methow Wildlife Area Fish Passage Barrier Correction Status Report:** As part of the Habitat Program's Technical Applications Division (TAPPS) effort to correct fish passage barriers and noncompliant diversions on WDFW-owned lands, the Capital Programs and Engineering (CP&E) construction crews have also been working on the Methow Wildlife Area in Okanogan County. Four fish passage barrier culverts are scheduled for correction during the 2006 construction season. To date, a 23-foot-wide bottomless arch culvert has been constructed at Beaver Creek to replace a 10-foot-wide culvert installed in 1971, which was a known fish passage barrier.

On July 24 at approximately 2:00 p.m., with the Beaver Creek project at 90% completion, a forest fire ignited near the area where crews were working. The construction crew was able to finish backfilling the culvert project to allow emergency fire crews through the project site on July 25 without delaying any fire suppression needs. As of 8:00 a.m., July 27, the lightning-caused "Tripod Fire" had grown in size to 7,000 acres with no containment, and has forced the closure of several roads to the northeast of Winthrop on the Methow Wildlife Area.

Until further notice, WDFW crews will not be allowed to access three of the four planned culvert replacement locations. Staff is working to coordinate an earlier start on the projects that are outside of any current fire danger. There have been some inquiries by U.S. Forest Service fire crews to utilize WDFW equipment and potentially some staff to assist as first responders to the growing wild fire. At this time, there have been no formal requests to respond to the fire.

CP&E crews have been working seven days a week on the Beaver Creek project and have made excellent progress. A permitted July 1 to August 1 in-water work window requirement (federally-listed Bull Trout, Summer Steelhead and Spring Chinook are known to utilize Beaver Creek) has been met. Crew leaders Ralph Tosland and Terry Elson, including respective staff deserve special mention for their efforts. Cooperation and coordination between TAPPS biologists, CP&E engineers and construction crews, and USFS personnel has also been excellent.

**Public Service Message in the Works:** Captain Hebner, Sergeant Chandler, and Olympia Public Affairs Officer, Darren Friedel, met with and discussed doing a problem wildlife piece with a freelance media outlet from London who is purporting to be working for the Discovery Channel of the National Geographic Society. If they are legitimate, a unique potential exists to get some good coverage for the agency and an important public service message out to a huge audience.

**Recreational Halibut Fisheries:** The coastal recreational halibut fisheries are currently closed. The North Coast (Neah Bay and La Push) recreational halibut fishery again had record-high catches during its May fishery, with over 50% of the available May quota harvested within the first three days of the fishery (54,544 pounds out of 85,856 pounds). Average weight was also up this year in both the North Coast and South Coast (Westport) areas (about 23-24 pounds, compared to a typical average of 19-20 pounds), which contributed to fairly early attainment of the respective quotas.

**Columbia River Fisheries:** The upper Columbia summer chinook run was upgraded the week of July 3 to an estimated 87,000 fish returning to the river mouth, compared to the pre-season forecast of 49,000 fish. This run size upgrade allowed for the chinook sport fishery below Bonneville Dam to continue through July, which had experienced exceptional catch rates through June and into the July 4 weekend. Through Compact action additional commercial fishing periods were set which included two 12-hour periods per week for the remainder of July. Treaty Indian fishing periods were also set and consisted of three and a half days per week through the end of July. The fall management period begins August 1, 2006.

**Ocean Sport and Troll Salmon Fisheries – In-season Modifications:** Regulations for ocean sport and commercial salmon fisheries North of Cape Falcon, Oregon were modified the week of July 24 due to the slow rate of catch for both chinook and coho salmon. Sport fishing rules adopted by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council in April included weekly five-day openings for all areas from the mouth of the Columbia River to the U.S.-Canada border. Through Sunday, July 23, only about 10% of the chinook salmon quota for this fishery had been taken. Coho catch rates were greater than chinook, but still were slow. Managers agreed that changing regulations to allow salmon fishing seven-days-per-week and a two salmon bag limit (previously only one chinook was allowed) beginning Friday, August 11, would not jeopardize attainment of the goal of a full summer season. Similar action to relax initial restrictions was taken for the non-Indian commercial troll salmon fishery. Very low catch of both chinook and coho and very few participating trollers in the July fishery convinced managers to modify weekly landing and possession restrictions that were designed to achieve a longer season and higher total economic benefits from the fishery.

**Columbia River Fisheries:** The first fall season Compact hearing occurred on July 27 in Cathlamet. The purpose was to set the initial non-Indian commercial fishing periods for early August and a treaty Indian sturgeon setline fishery. The non-Indian fall seasons' fisheries were outlined in March and April during the North of Falcon pre-season process and an allocation agreement was developed. Staff will use the pre-season plan to develop fall fishing options. The summer chinook commercial season concluded on July 31. The fishers are getting exceptional prices for chinook, currently averaging \$3.50 per pound.

**You Will Be Checked In the Backcountry:** Officers Cook and Jorg patrolled backcountry lakes on foot and contacted many surprised hikers and fishermen. They conducted backcountry foot patrols of Ilswoot, Jade, Emerald, Opal, Cloudy, Al, and Locket lakes. The two walked a lot of miles and donated a great deal of blood to the local bug populations. Though a majority of the fishermen were legal some were startled by the Officers presence. This was the first foot patrol by Enforcement in some time to these lakes. Many good contacts were made that left impressions and the one cited for no license indicated that he did not think he would be checked in the backcountry.

**Grant County Poisoning Case:** Officer Crown referred the Gloyd Seeps Poisoning Case to the Grant County Prosecutor for charging. This case was started in the latter part of March but had been delayed pending toxicology reports from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's forensics laboratory and Washington State University.

**Officer Assists in Emergency Health Situations:** Sgt. Rhoden assisted Westport Fire with the removal of an injured person from a charter boat. Two days later Sgt. Rhoden assisted Westport Fire by giving CPR to an individual who had collapsed on a commercial fishing boat. It is not known whether that person survived but no pulse was detected even after the paramedics were working on the victim in the ambulance.

**Illegal Body Gripping Traps Used:** Officer Stevens followed up with information obtained from Sgt. Chandler regarding a local mole trapper trapping moles with scissor traps in violation of trapping regulations. Sean Carrell was contacted in order to determine if this particular individual was a Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO) and what the current status on trapping moles was. Sean advised that it didn't matter whether or not this individual was a licensed NWCO. The law prohibits the use of any body gripping trap period. It is common knowledge that most mole trappers use scissor traps, but it seems that most people are simply turning a blind eye to these particular violations. Sgt. Chandler has warned this individual several times in the past about trapping moles. Additional information is being gathered and it looks as though a citation is warranted. Further investigation will be conducted next week

**Search for Child on Klickitat River:** On the Fourth of July, Officer Bolton was in the town of Klickitat when Klickitat County Sheriff's Office put out a call of a small girl that was rafting the Klickitat River with an inner tube. She had become separated from the adults she was with and her whereabouts were unknown. Officer Bolton began searching the river and located the girl who reported that she had paddled to shore and made it out safely.

**Boat Rescued off San Juan Island:** Officer Vandivert found an unoccupied 15' powerboat adrift in Haro Strait about 1½ miles off of San Juan Island. Officer Vandivert notified the Coast Guard and the San Juan County Sheriff's Office, but the boat had not been reported missing. Officer Vandivert towed the unoccupied vessel into Snug Harbor and tied it up to the guest dock. Officer Vandivert finally found the vessel owner at home. The owner didn't know the boat was missing, and was grateful to have the boat secured in the marina.

**Timber Theft a Real Problem:** At the Stevens County Fish and Wildlife advisory board meeting, Representative Bob Sump was vocal regarding Fish and Wildlife Officers working general authority issues. Second- and third- hand information was bantered around, that no one in the room could substantiate. Sergeant Charron did an excellent job of explaining to Representative Sump that we only exercised our general authority in the course of our primary fish and wildlife enforcement role. Sergeant Charron pointed out that timber theft was a real problem in Stevens and Ferry counties. Sergeant Charron went on to assert that he thought the vast majority of Representative Sump's constituents would want Fish and Wildlife Officers to be vigilant for wood theft as well as drunk drivers and other public safety issues. Captain Whorton has put in a call to Representative Sump's office to offer to discuss his respective issues.

**Officers Assist Fishers in Dangerous Situation:** Sgt. Heinck and Officer Valentine were working the Upper Skagit Chinook fishery in a remote area when they observed a father trying to wade across a high creek with his young son. The boy lost his footing and was being held by his father. The main Skagit River was high and swiftly running approximately twenty-five feet away. The father then lost his footing and fell into the creek with his son. Sgt. Heinck grabbed the boy while Officer Valentine helped the father. Both father and son were safely transported to shore. The father said he had just been thinking that he wished someone were there to help. The father must have had an expensive fishing rod because he never let go of it during the whole ordeal. Also, both father and son most certainly learned why the creek is named Swift Creek.

**Wildlife Harassment:** Chelan County Officer Oswald contacted Central Washington Helicopters out of Wenatchee and warned them for harassing bighorn sheep on Chelan Butte. They were observed hovering over the herd and scattering the animals. They didn't seem to realize the problems associated with running the animals in 100-degree heat "Just to check them out."

**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*

**July 2006 License Sales Increase:** As of July 31, 2006 License Sales increased approximately 13% in July 06 in comparison to July 05. The largest increase is in temporary fishing license revenue, followed by combination fishing license revenue. Even though we do not have data to quantify it we believe that the Lake Washington Sockeye fishery contributed to this increase.

License Type	05-Jul	06-Jul	% Change
Freshwater	\$799,887.00	\$833,854.00	4.25%
Temp Fishing	\$153,143.00	\$330,019.00	115.50%
Saltwater	\$202,930.00	\$194,639.00	-4.09%
Shellfish	\$243,941.00	\$229,078.00	-6.09%
Totals	\$1,399,901.00	\$1,587,590.00	13.41%



Washington Department of  
**FISH and WILDLIFE**

## COMPETENCE GOAL:

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

**Mt. St. Helens Elk Herd and Wildlife Area Plan Open House:** The second open house event to review the Mt. St. Helens Elk Herd and Wildlife Area Plans was held on June 28, 2006, at the Water Resources Center in Vancouver. The meeting was not well attended. Only three individuals came to ask questions and share their comments with biologists.

The third and final open house event was held on July 18, 2006, at the Red Lion Hotel in Seattle (Sea-Tac). The meeting was moderately well attended with approximately 24 members of the public on hand to discuss the issues. Acting Regional Wildlife Program Manager Brian Calkins gave an introduction to the attendees, explaining the issues at hand and the materials available for review, and introducing biological staff present at the meeting. Manager Calkins, District Wildlife Biologists David Anderson, Pat Miller, and Anita Davison along with Field Biologists Robin Woodin and Eric Holman represented WDFW at the gathering.

**Project CAT:** Nicole Ricketts, Rocky Spencer, and Ph.D. candidate Brian Kertson represented WDFW at a recent Tahoma School District 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum-planning day to integrate Project CAT field activities and research within next year's curriculum. This began the Tahoma School District participation within the Project CAT Westside research. WDFW biologists and Education and Outreach Section staff will pilot some of these activities with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade summer school program, engaging students around the local cougar research and GPS technology.

**New HRMS Goes Live:** WDFW successfully made the transition to the new state Human Resource Management System with the July 10 payroll. HRMS is the new state payroll and personnel system designed to meet the requirements of collective bargaining. A major part of the migration is the new automated, internet-based time sheet system called TotalTime. The agency implemented TotalTime in mid-June, which replaced the use of paper time sheets. TotalTime collects employee hours and account codes, uploads the data to HRMS for payroll, and supports the labor cost distribution process to develop billings for contracts.

**Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee Multi-Agency Watershed Characterization Project:** Staff from WDFW, Ecology, Department of Transportation, Puget Sound Action Team, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development have chosen Whatcom County as partner for the combined watershed characterization. For WDFW, the project offers the chance of extending the Local Habitat Assessment and enhanced Priority Habitats and Species methodologies and delivering the information in an easily used format. Representatives have begun meeting to outline the technical needs for each model.

## SCIENCE GOAL:

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

**7<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Fish Biology:** The International Congress was held in eastern Canada the week of July 17. Fish Program staff, in conjunction with researchers from Makah and Oregon State University, submitted a paper on the use of stable isotopes to determine the life history and behavior of marine fish. The concept is that by taking a small sample of tissue from the otolith (ear bone) of a fish a great deal can be learned of the environmental history of that fish, such as the salinity and water temperature. Otoliths of many fish species are like trees - they deposit a marking for each year of life. By using these markings, we can infer the type of environment of the fish life at during different periods of its life. Movement between deep and shallow waters should be detectable using this technique.

The organizers of the Congress accepted the paper enthusiastically and asked us to deliver the first talk of the session - to start the session off with a bang.

**Inter-Agency Cooperative Sampling:** During the week of July 10, the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee assisted by WDFW staff sampled five sites along Snohomish County shorelines for settling juvenile Dungeness crab. These samplings have been occurring on a biweekly basis since mid-May and will continue through September 5, 2006. The information being collected should help refine the time period during which juvenile Dungeness crab settle on local shores, describe what shoreline habitats they reside, and how they grow during their early juvenile stages.

**National Report Released:** The "Harmful Algal Research and Response: A Human Dimensions Strategy" (HARR-HD) was released this week. The HARR-HD is designed to justify and guide a coordinated national commitment to human dimensions research critical to prevent and respond to impacts of harmful algal blooms (HABs). The report is a result of a unique weeklong NOAA sponsored workshop held September 2005 in Washington D.C. In attendance were a small group of invited social scientists, physical scientists, human health managers and fishery managers from around the nation. WDFW Coastal Shellfish Lead Biologist Dan Ayres was one of the workshop attendees and a contributor to the report. He has a limited number of copies of the report available to interested WDFW staff.

**Exotic Species:** The graduate student monitoring a wetland restoration project on the lower East Fork Lewis River has captured five more specimens of an eastern Asian species called the Amur goby (*Rhinogobius brunneus* spp.). This appears to be the first occurrence of this species in North America. This amphidromous species has a high potential to reproduce and compete with or prey upon native fishes. The goby may have spread into the Columbia River system following high water events. Fish Program aquatic nuisance species staff will continue to work with the Fish & Wildlife Service and university staff to identify and monitor its dispersal, habitat use and food habits.

**Publications:** Journal Landscape and Urban Planning accepted The Chico Watershed paper. Title: Defining Alternative Futures and Projecting Their Effects on the Spatial Distribution of Wildlife Habitats (George F. Wilhere, Mary J. Linders, and Brian L. Cosentino).

**Hood Canal Crab Tagging Study:** Twenty-two tagged crab were recovered and reported in the first five days of the Hood Canal recreational crab fishery. These tagged crab are part of a cooperative study by WDFW and the Skokomish Tribe to collect information on what potential affect low dissolved oxygen has on the migration and behavior of Dungeness crab in Hood Canal. In addition, a field-based study is being conducted in southern Hood Canal to assess the feasibility of estimating the recreational crab catch in that sub-area. An ancillary objective is to see if this methodology could be applied on a Puget Sound wide basis. The study involves randomly tagging recreational crab buoys from a marine vessel and determining the proportion of effort and catch those tags represent through creel surveys at three public boat access points in south Hood Canal. The question is whether sufficient tag recoveries and catch information can be obtained at the boat ramps to make a statistically valid estimate of the total catch.

**Western Pond Turtles:** Biologists Greg Schirato and Kyle Guzlas continue to monitor and track western pond turtles at the Goat Ranch Pond (GRP). The work from late May to early July involves radio tracking the females, waiting for them to nest, and then marking and protecting the nests. The eggs will then be dug up for the turtle head start program at the zoo. We already placed the transmitters on the females. Nesting occurs in the afternoon. Turtles are tracked from 1100 to 1900 hours. GRP requires continuous tracking to cover the large lake. This means that GRP tracking occurs each day for about ten hours, seven days a week, until all nesting is complete.

**Citizen Science:** Chuck Gibilisco and Nicole Ricketts are currently documenting and analyzing the results of Project Swallow, based out of Sunnyside, Washington. Preliminary results of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade student assessment test scores indicate a significant improvement in several areas, documenting nearly 75% student comprehension based on the objectives.

Project Swallow revolves around the construction, installation, and subsequent species interactions and productivity of 40 bird nest boxes located within the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. The preliminary results also indicate the gathering of credible NatureMapping data to be used by the Sunnyside Wildlife Area and the University of Washington NatureMapping program.

Project Swallow has been a two-year effort by the Chief Kamiakin Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Sunnyside, along with the Yakima Basin Environmental Education Program. The results from Project Swallow and other summaries on WDFW citizen science projects will be available as technical reports in the future.

**Spotted Owl - Barred Owl Research Project:** Joe Buchanan and John Pierce recently received \$15,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to put together an expert team of northern spotted owl ecologists and quantitative scientists (4-6 people). The team will develop an experimental barred owl removal research design framework to investigate the effects of barred owls on northern spotted owl survival, reproduction, and behavior. The final research study design should be completed by the end of this year.

**Journal Publication Of Off-channel Habitat Assessment Information:** The Transactions of the American Fisheries Society has accepted a submitted publication titled, "*Coho salmon smolt production from constructed and natural floodplain habitats.*" Two of the co-authors of this publication are Chris Detrick and Dave King of our staff who provided juvenile and adult fish assessment information from our off-channel habitat enhancement sites on rivers of North Puget Sound and the west side of the Olympic Peninsula.