

# Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

## June 1-2, 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*

**Quincy Wildlife Area Fire:** Officers observed a suspicious column of smoke coming from an area near the north end of the Quincy Wildlife Area. Further investigation revealed a range fire burning in a ravine on the wildlife area near Ancient Lakes. Grant County Fire District 3 was summoned, and was able to get control of the fire fairly quickly. Approximately 3 acres were burned. Officers were unable to determine the cause of the blaze. It's awfully early, and green, for a wildfire already.

**Geoduck Research in Southern Hood Canal:** As part of House Bill 1896, staff are investigating geoduck clams to answer questions about the low dissolved oxygen events in southern Hood Canal. We established index plots in Hood Canal to look at long-term trends in geoduck populations and recently began digging relic geoduck shells in southern Hood Canal for ageing and chemical analyses. The shell recovery work is taking place at Musqueti Point near the Great Bend of southern Hood Canal. To date we have excavated a hole 20 ft by 3.5 feet and approximately 2.5 feet deep, with a venturi dredge, and have recovered 47 geoduck shells, and 6 live geoducks. Digging will continue until we reach 60 live animals and 60 shells at this site. We will also dredge for 60 additional shells at the Tahuya River delta in southern Hood Canal. Shells will be aged at the University of Washington. Dr. Yongwen Gao of Makah Fisheries is heading the shell chemistry work, which investigates the history of Hood Canal's water chemistry from minerals laid down in the shell's annual growth layers.

**Pre-fishing Geoduck Survey:** Members of the Shellfish Dive Team have initiated a pre-fishing dive survey of the Point Beals South geoduck tract #09700, formerly called Vashon East Polluted tract, located along the eastern shoreline of Vashon Island. The subtidal commercial geoduck harvest area is approximately 97 acres and was last surveyed in 1979. A recent extension and upgrade of a wastewater treatment plant outfall pipeline is expected to result in an "Approved" harvest classification for the tract area from the Washington Department of Health. Final health status reclassification is expected in October 2007. This dive survey work is being done collaboratively with staff from the Department of Natural Resources, under a reciprocal dive agreement.

**Quilcene Tidelands Cleanup and Oyster Relay:** WDFW shellfish staff from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory in Brinnon celebrated Earth Day Weekend by removing roughly six tons of one-inch in diameter PVC plastic pipe from the agency's Quilcene Tidelands. The plastic debris -- if laid end-to-end would stretch more than four linear miles -- had been used for commercial oyster long-line culture, and was inherited by WDFW when the tidelands were purchased in 1993 from Coast Seafoods. Assisting in the cleanup were crews from Taylor Shellfish Farms, Hood Canal Oyster Company, Coast Seafoods, Penn Cove Shellfish, Seattle Shellfish, Quilcene High School Aquaculture Club, Washington Sea Grant and citizen volunteers. This effort removed approximately 40% of the PVC pipe on the tidelands. Grant funds from the Puget Sound Action Team partially paid for this cleanup of plastic debris. Planning is underway to finish the cleanup on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, and any WDFW staff who could assist in that effort would be greatly appreciated.

The same work crews that cleaned up the plastic debris also removed 800 bushels of harvestable-sized Pacific oysters from the Quilcene long-line oyster bed. These oysters, many of which were attached to the plastic debris, lived in an area that is difficult for the public to access. Following the cleanup, they were relayed to the tidelands adjacent to our agency's beach access. This effort will provide roughly 100,000 oysters for recreational harvest opportunity. An additional 800 bushels will be picked and relayed June 2<sup>nd</sup> as part of the planned plastic debris cleanup.

Besides removing plastic debris from the environment, this project will increase the habitat available for eel grass, increase habitat for forage fish, restore the tidelands to a more natural state, increase clam production, and boost recreational shell-fishing opportunities.

**Invasive Tunicate Removal:** The shellfish dive team assisted the Aquatic Nuisance Species Team with removal of an invasive species of tunicate from boats moored in Pleasant Harbor in Hood Canal. The species targeted was the club tunicate *Styela clava*. The purpose was to remove all tunicates from infested boats to minimize the spread of tunicates to other locations. Non-native invasive tunicates, also called sea squirts, can rapidly multiply, out-compete or smother native species and take over habitats.

**U.S. Corp of Engineer Survey:** On April 3, 2007, Brandon Bryant participated on a beam trawl survey with the U.S. Corps of Engineers. The survey area was Grays Harbor and the survey vessel was the Shoalhunter, based out of Westport, WA. The aim of the survey was to determine Dungeness crab presence and relative density in the vicinity of the Half Moon Bay Disposal Site as per the established agreements with WDFW.

Trawl survey work typically occurs approximately two weeks prior to the initiation of dredging in Grays Harbor. We also conducted trawl surveys in the proposed test dredge area to determine Dungeness crab presence and density to further determine impacts and potential mitigation for the proposed test dredge study. Dungeness crabs were measured and shell hardness recorded while fish species and crangon shrimp were identified, enumerated, and recorded.

**Puget Sound Clam Enhancement:** A total of 800,000 hatchery-reared Manila clam “seed” were planted on three public beaches. Cushman (Saltwater) Park near Hoodspoint received 200,000 seed, Sequim Bay State Park received 350,000 seed, and Mystery Bay State Park near Port Townsend was planted with 250,000 seed. This clam enhancement is expected to yield 5,000 sport limits in roughly 2-3 years. This is the first time our agency has planted Manila clam seed at Mystery Bay State Park, although the tideland served as the first experimental Manila clam enhancement on Washington public tidelands in the 1970s. The Washington Sea Grant under the direction of University of Washington fisheries professor Dr. Kenneth K. Chew, now a Fish & Wildlife Commissioner, performed the experimental seeding in the 1970’s. Since 1992, our agency has planted the Mystery Bay State Park tidelands with Pacific oyster seed, providing one of the few sport oyster fisheries in the Admiralty Inlet area.

**Sequim Bay State Park Inter-tidal Shellfish Creel Survey:** Twelve oyster harvesters were creeled at Sequim Bay State Park on Friday of last week. This is the second winter enhanced oyster beds at Sequim Bay have been open and we have been seeing increased use of the beds during this normally slower time of year. One group of five harvesters was observed trying to take 80 mainly under-sized oysters in the shell. Staff informed the group of the regulations and the oysters were returned to the beach.

**Shellfish Habitat Consultation:** Technical advice was provided to the Jefferson County Conservation District and a private tideland owner regarding a proposal to remove a portion of an abandoned railroad causeway in order to reconnect an upland marsh with Discovery Bay. Existing conditions due to a failed drainage culvert are harming the owner’s clam resources. Correctly done, the project should remove the existing harm to the clam resource and likely would increase shellfish productivity.

**Port Blakely Safe Harbor Agreement:** Port Blakely Tree Farms is in the initial stages of developing a landscape plan for approximately 45,000 acres in the Riffe Lake area. The plan will be a Safe Harbor Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for spotted owls and marbled murrelets, and will also be a Landowner Option Plan for spotted owls and a Cooperative Habitat Enhancement Agreement for marbled murrelets under state Forest Practices rules. While Port Blakely could achieve state regulatory certainty through the federal process alone, it has chosen to concurrently develop its plan to directly fulfill the state process as well. Port Blakely’s practice is to maintain a longer harvest rotation while conducting harvest thinning to remove timber volume and promote larger tree growth. It appears Port Blakely currently has no nesting owls or murrelets on its property, but its management regime has the potential to create nesting habitat for spotted owls, and to some extent, marbled murrelets; thus the need to secure federal and state certainty. The company may be interested in conducting some amount of variable thinning to further enhance owl habitat and also contribute to spotted owl and/or northern flying squirrel (owl prey) research. WDFW is in the process of designating an individual to represent the agency on the technical team.

**2007 Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grant Awards:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the grant awards for the 2007 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. WDFW received full funding for the third year of Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) development for both the Hydraulic Project Approval HCP and the Wildlife Areas HCP. These grants will cover work during the 2008 calendar year. Additionally, the Walla Walla Basin Bi-State HCP was also fully funded.

**Land Management Advisory Council (LMAC) met with Wildlife Diversity Council (WDAC) on Grazing:** WDFW's two advisory councils in the Wildlife Program met in Ellensburg to discuss livestock grazing issues, including the proposed Whiskey Dick grazing permit that is part of the Skookumchuck Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Plan. The meeting included a tour of the Wild Horse Wind Farm and the Whiskey Dick permit area. There was general support from both groups for WDFW's CRM efforts and the proposal. WDAC members expressed concerns about monitoring, cautioning that without a very detailed monitoring and assessment program it will be difficult to achieve success. Everyone agreed on the need to have an adaptive management strategy. The meeting was timely, given the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review currently underway for the Whiskey Dick grazing proposal. The area will not be grazed this year, although may be grazed next year. Steve Herman from Western Watershed Projects attended and presented arguments against grazing the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area.

**Wildlife Areas and Douglas County Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) Coordination:** Jennifer Quan met with the Douglas County (a.k.a. Foster Creek) HCP project leaders and advisory groups to begin coordination on covered species, activities, data, and science that the HCPs will potentially have in common. Agricultural and grazing practices and their effects to terrestrial and aquatic species may be addressed in both HCPs. Also discussed was Douglas County's intent to emphasize WDFW wildlife areas (Wells Wildlife Area complex) as part of a "conservation core" - a positive long-term landscape feature that would help to illustrate their HCP action's (plus the "conservation core") net positive benefits for ESA species. It was determined that the WDFW's Wildlife Areas HCP staff will need to coordinate closely with Douglas County, so that the value of Douglas County's "conservation core" is accurately conveyed, and potential confusion by public and regulatory HCP reviewers is minimized. There may be the need for formal agreements between WDFW and Douglas County to accommodate each other's HCPs and adaptive management plans.

**Blue Mountains Wildlife Area - Pilot Grazing Program Update:** Blue Mountains Wildlife Area staff spent the majority of their time for a week pounding steel posts in the South Fork of Asotin Creek for a temporary electric fence to exclude livestock from the riparian area. So far, we have placed 718 steel posts covering a distance of a little over four miles. Technician Mick Scott spent one day assisting east end staff. We still have a difficult section ahead of us and need to install insulators, poly-wire, and the energizer to power the fence. Tom Hendrickson began building fence in Pintler Creek, and we will join him to assist once we complete our South Fork project. We are still waiting for cultural resource surveys on Smoothing Iron for water projects, enclosures, and permanent fence projects. David Woodall has been in twice since checking on cattle. Cattle are using the hillside below Meyer's Ridge Road and have been using the bottom area for a drink of water. Tom has been onsite nearly every day; making sure cattle are utilizing forage on the uplands and not spending any time in the riparian areas. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice took four representatives from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) on a tour of the pilot project on Smoothing Iron. They wanted to see the project first hand to get an understanding of what the pilot project is about. We parted company with the RMEF group fully supportive of the pilot project and willing to offer assistance in the form of volunteer labor and Production Advisory Committee project support.

**Mt. St. Helens:** Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has assigned staff to work on the transfer of approximately 4,000 acres at Mt. St. Helens to WDFW. After the eruption, this land was acquired by the WSDOT for the purpose of constructing a debris dam to reduce the silt from the Toutle River mudflow. The intent was that after all activities were completed the property would be transferred to WDFW for permanent ownership and management. Recent communications between Region 5 and WSDOT staff have resulted in this action getting back on track.

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery:** Another female pygmy rabbit was taken by a raptor on Sagebrush Flat. This leaves 2 pygmy rabbits, 1 male and 1 female remaining. Weeks before this, three carcasses (2 male, 1 female) were recovered whole in apparently starved condition. Supplemental feeding has been initiated to the remaining two pygmy rabbits. Although there are recent coyote signs on Sagebrush Flat, the biologists appear to be capturing the coyotes shortly after they enter the area, taking a total of 15 with the relocation of 4 badgers.

**Wooten Wildlife Area Post-Fire Site Visit/Tour:** Shana Winegeart and Doug Kuehn hosted a field tour with members from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Regional, District, and Olympia WDFW staff on the School Fire Restoration, mainly the fish related projects, including road abandonment, placement of large woody materials, and re-vegetation. NOAA/NMFS was very pleased with WDFW salvage and recovery efforts associated with the School Fire. It appears that we have significantly complemented the natural recovery processes. The best management practices and conservation measures have clearly paid off. There is a major difference between department lands and adjacent landowners. For the most part, private landowners clear-cut all their timbered lands and, in some cases, Forest Services (FS) nearly cleared all of the trees on certain portions of their land. In many cases, those practices have led to very unstable slopes and increased erosion.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse Translocations:** The dust has settled from the translocation of this year's Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Washington, Oregon, Utah, Idaho, and the Colville Confederated Tribes conducted a joint trapping effort in northern Utah and southeastern Idaho. A total of 91 grouse were captured, with 50 of those birds translocated to northeastern Oregon and 41 translocated to north-central Washington (21 grouse from Utah and 20 grouse from Idaho). The translocated grouse were released within twenty-four hours of capture on the Swanson Lake Wildlife Area, West Foster Creek, and the Nespelem area of the Colville Indian Reservation. Movement, survival, and productivity are currently being monitored on all three areas.

**Land Use Rules:** A proposed new chapter in Washington's Administrative Code 232 will address public conduct on WDFW wildlife areas. The rule proposal brings together some new and existing rules to address a variety of issues ranging from camping, pets, road and vehicle use, discharge of firearms, and commercial use on department lands. The rules will help protect important fish and wildlife resources, provide for fish and wildlife related recreation - including wildlife viewing, and ensure the safety of users. One can see these topics as an ongoing discussion phase throughout the past. Clearly we have overlooked some of our users of department lands, as the rules are generating a lot of comments and touching a few nerves. Some of this is the result of WDFW's historical liberal public use and access policy. To view the rules, you may go to: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/land\\_line/land\\_use\\_wac\\_3-30-07.pdf](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/land_line/land_use_wac_3-30-07.pdf)

**Lands 20/02 Process:** Region 3 staff met with other agency program representatives regarding future land acquisition priorities in the region. Staff is preparing applications and outlines for projects that must go through the Lands 20/02 process and be reviewed by the Land Management Advisory Council. This was a productive meeting that helped focus on the important short- and long-term acquisition targets for the future acquisition to ensure that lands most at risk are submitted first. Staff is developing prioritized acquisition plans to protect large blocks of remaining critical habitat that also maximizes ecological connectivity between them. We are in an extremely important and pivotal year with respect to land acquisition, and it is a race against time to seek funding to acquire large, intact areas of critical habitat and land providing important connectivity corridors between them before these tracts are parceled out and development occurs.

**Comments on Easton Development:** Staff provided comments on a rezone and preliminary plat of 520 acres along Interstate 90 near Easton. This project proposal contemplates a 225-lot subdivision on 120 acres. Additional phases are referenced in the State Environmental Policy Act materials. Staff expressed concerns with piecemeal review of the project and wildlife connectivity impacts to the I-90 corridor. Considering the tremendous effort (both historical and on-going) to establish and maintain connectivity in the Cascade Range, we have concerns that the project receives a thorough review to safeguard the existing private, state and federal investments in connectivity that have occurred and are planned for this transportation corridor. To lend perspective to the issue, the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Road Improvement Project has in the neighborhood of 100 million dollars of projects in the preferred alternative aimed at improving or maintaining ecological connectivity. Uncoordinated development can harm this investment and consequently materially harm our ability to incorporate connectivity measures in future road projects.

**Wenas Creek Feedlot:** A proposal to develop a feedlot, holding up to 1,000 head of cattle along Wenas Creek, has been withdrawn by the landowner and project proponent, a prospective buyer. Resource agencies and Ecology provided extensive comments on Yakima County's Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) for the feedlot. While WDFW expressed significant concerns with the inadequacy of the project proposal to protect fish and wildlife habitat, including the riparian area and floodplain along the creek, the county permitted the project with minimal protection requirements. However, over 1,000 local residents submitted a petition to stop the project, contending that noise, dust, flies, water contamination, and increased traffic made the feedlot incompatible with the area, although feedlots are an approved land use under current zoning. The residents sought legal council and appealed the county's permit. Subsequent to the appeal, the project proponent and prospective buyer of the property dropped their feedlot proposal, claiming harassment from local landowners, and it now appears the feedlot development proposal is dead.

**Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB):** At the May 3, 2007, Salmon Recovery Funding Board meeting in Cle Elum, the SRFB approved funding for the Lead Entity Operational Grant Program for 2007-2009. The Legislative appropriation totaled \$3,250,000, and the Department's proposal included additional funding in the amount of \$162,598. The resulting biennial budget for the program will total \$3,412,598. Additional funding was requested by WDFW to cover costs of a new lead entity in WRIA 20 (North Pacific Coast), lead entity training, increased costs associated with administration of the program, lead entity day, Lead Entity Advisory Group and Watershed Stewardship Team coordination.

**Hydraulic Project Approval HCP:** Six public meetings were conducted across the state from April 30 through May 15 to introduce the Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan to the public. Meetings were held in Yakima (April 30), Cashmere (May 1), Spokane (May 2), Mt. Vernon (May 8), Lacey (May 10), and Vancouver (May 15). The meetings were geared towards educating the public in regards to our goals for the HCP and the planning process we will be using. The meetings were fairly well attended and provided a good starting point for outreach on this six-year planning process.

The Hydraulic Project Approval HCP was awarded \$686,000 in Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation funds to continue planning efforts on our Hydraulic Project Approval Habitat Conservation Plan. The funding will be available in January 2008. The grant will provide for additional staff to work on HCP development, continued development of a Hydraulic Project Approval monitoring program, development of a Hydraulic Project Approval GIS layer, outreach, and other research to support HCP development.

**U.S. Corps of Engineers Dike Maintenance Meeting:** Mark Grandstaff (ARHPM) attended a meeting with the Walla Walla District office of the Corps of Engineers (COE) to discuss vegetation management on Corps' levees. Since the issues with hurricane Katrina, the Corps is putting renewed emphasis on vegetation management.

Old standards called for removal of woody vegetation greater than four inches in diameter. Their current standards call for removal down to two inches. They will be inspecting levees and letting the sponsors know what needs to be done. If the sponsors do not take measures to correct the problems, they will no longer be eligible for COE or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) assistance. This puts them in a difficult position since the sponsor is responsible for all permitting and consultation. It is likely that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the state will have requirements for vegetation management that may conflict with COE directives. This meeting was the first step in developing the COE policy and procedure for levee management.

**Draft Northwest Area Wildlife Response Plan:** The WDFW Oil Spill Team's Oiled Wildlife Rescue Coordinator and the USFWS Regional Response Coordinator presented the draft Northwest Area Wildlife Response Plan to the Region 10 Regional Response Team (RRT) at a recent meeting in Richland. The draft Wildlife Response Plan covers the coastal and inland zones of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and describes how oiled wildlife rescue and rehabilitation efforts will be managed and coordinated in the event of an oil spill. The draft plan, which is two years in the making, was well received by the RRT. One of the Coast Guard members of the RRT suggested that the plan be forwarded to the national level as an example of how plans should be written. The draft plan will soon be posted for public review and its anticipated adoption will be in June of 2007.

**Oil spill Drill Tests Regional Dispersant Use Policy:** WDFW spill team staff recently participated in a worst-case oil spill exercise simulating a major oil spill in the Strait of Georgia. Federal and State personnel worked with staff from ConocoPhillips to test various aspects of spill response. A major part of this drill focused on the decision making process for evaluating and approving the use of chemical dispersants as a spill response tool. This is one of the first times that the Region 10 Regional Response Team has drilled the potential use of dispersants in Washington waters. WDFW Spill team staff worked with other state, federal and tribal trustees in the Environmental Unit of the Incident Command Structure to provide technical/scientific support for the spill response and to evaluate the benefits and tradeoffs of dispersants and other response options.

**Columbia River Estuarine Coastal Fund (CRECF) Restoration Grants:** Salmon, sea birds, and native plants are among the species that will benefit from conservation and restoration projects funded with community service payments from polluters. Ten projects, all in or near the Columbia River Estuary, were selected to receive a total of \$700,000. Several of the projects funded in Washington will support salmon restoration planning efforts in the Grays River watershed by Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board and in the Gee Creek watershed by the WSU Clark County Extension. The Columbia River Estuary Task Force will get support for ecological monitoring to assess effectiveness of five tideland restoration projects in Washington and Oregon. USFWS and the University of Washington will receive funds to support seabird mortality modeling and monitoring efforts along the outer coast. These models will be used to help assess seabird mortality events from oil spills and other catastrophic events along the coast. Additional information on the CRECF and projects funded with this penalty money is available at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation website (<http://www.nfwf.org/>). Natural Resource Damage Assessment/Restoration staff from the Spill Team represents WDFW on the CRECF trustee advisory board that recommended the projects for funding.

**West Coast Joint Assessment Team (WCJAT) releases “Recommendations for Conducting Cooperative Natural Resource Damage Assessments”:** The West Coast Joint Assessment Team (an interstate forum of state and federal trustee agencies from Washington, California, Oregon and from the oil industry) recently completed a guidance document “*Recommendations for Conducting Cooperative Natural Resource Damage Assessments*”. This document was developed to encourage cooperation between responsible parties and trustee agencies and provide guidance on how to: 1) initiate a cooperative natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) during an oil spill, and 2) move from the initial chaotic phase of response to a cooperative injury assessment as soon as possible. The overall goals of cooperative assessments are to optimize NRDA and to expedite restoration based settlements for medium and large oil spills. The document will be posted on NOAA’s Cooperative Assessment Process web site (<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/partner/cap/index.html>). NRDA and Restoration staff from the Spill Team represents the agency on the WCJAT and contributed significantly in the development of this document.

**Growth Management-Related Bills to Watch:** Most of the attempts to significantly change the Growth Management Act (GMA), including best available science requirements, failed this legislative session. However, the GMA coordinator will be working with other state agencies to track several pieces of legislation as they are implemented. Some bills are expected to have a positive effect, including EHB 5108, which establishes a new Office of Farmland Preservation, whose tasks include managing incentive programs such as agricultural conservation easements, and 2SHB 1636, which directs CTED to work with central Puget Sound communities to create a regional transfer of development rights (TDR) program to protect those rural areas from sprawl. The budget also includes funding for TDR programs. One bill that PHS/GMA staff will be closely following is SSB 5248, which provides a three-year “time-out” on local adoption or amendment of critical area ordinances affecting agricultural activities in rural or resource lands. During this period, the WSU-UW Ruckelshaus Center will convene stakeholders to seek agreement about how agriculture is to be treated under GMA, and report to the Legislature in 2010. Overall, the 2007 session was very active for growth management issues, and WDFW’s engagement in the session was instrumental in bringing the fish and wildlife perspective on these issues before the legislature.

## **PUBLIC GOAL:**

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

**Mass Quantities of Wasted Seafood Discovered:** Officers organized and facilitated a large-scale border emphasis at the Blaine and Sumas border crossings in conjunction with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) outbound inspection team. Many commercial fish and shellfish contacts were made from northbound and southbound traffic through both ports of entry. Several different Canadian seafood companies were contacted bringing live ling cod and shellfish south, bound for markets and wholesale dealers in Washington and California. Officers issued citations to three different companies for importing live lingcod without the required WDFW permit. Officers inspected a truck with live lingcod, live king crab, and 1,425 pounds of live manila clams. There were no certification tags attached to the clams. The driver produced 10 incomplete tags from his cab. The tags had been partially filled out at the company's office and only accounted for 250 pounds of clams. Many of the clams appeared to be dead and the load had a foul smell. The clams were seized and destroyed for being in violation of Title 69 Department of Health regulations.

**Ringold Spring Chinook Bank Fishery:** Fishing success picked up slightly during the second full week of spring Chinook bank fishing at Ringold. We estimate 21 adult hatchery Chinook and one jack were harvested. One wild Chinook was caught and released. Total for the season is 23 adults, three jacks with four wild (non-clipped) Chinook caught and released. WDFW staff is currently sampling roughly 50% of the effort. Anglers can hook and release 13 more wild upper Columbia River spring Chinook during the mark selective fishery before the "ESA allowable wild impacts" (incidental mortalities) are expended. The fishery is scheduled to run through May 31, unless the total allowable impact of 17 wild fish caught and released is reached sooner.

**Hood Canal Recreational Spot Shrimp Fishery:** More than 17,000 recreational shrimp fishers participated in the first four days of the Hood Canal spot shrimp fishery. On the third day of the fishery, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 20,458 pounds of spot shrimp were caught. Whereas effort had increased on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the fishery, compared to 2006 levels, on the fourth day, May 16<sup>th</sup>, a very low tide of -3.1 ft, reduced effort below that expected for a second Wednesday, and only 9,756 pounds were landed. After four days of fishing, a total of 68,559 pounds of spot shrimp have been landed, which leaves 16,441 pounds remaining in the recreational harvest share of 85,000 pounds. There were 7,615 fishers during the third and fourth days of the fishery, which was only a slight decrease (54) compared to the number of fishers in 2006, however, the average catch rate in 2007 (3.9 pounds per pot) was a decrease of nine percent from that in 2006 (4.3 pounds per pot). The remaining recreational harvest share will provide for at least a fifth day of fishing on another weekday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Notification about the additional day of fishing was distributed to State and Tribal shrimp managers, Enforcement, recreational advisers, vendors and the media.

**New Geoduck Information Web Page:** A new geoduck clam information page has been put on the agency's Internet web site. The newly revised page comes in response to the many calls and e-mails the agency has received from sport harvesters about where to find and how to dig geoduck clams on public beaches.

The page contains updated recommendations on the best public beaches for geoduck harvesting with links to our “beach pages” for more detailed information on the specific beaches. Tips on how to dig geoduck clams are provided, as well as basic information on biology, WDFW geoduck enhancement projects, and links to the WDFW and DNR pages on the commercial geoduck fishery. More photos will be added to this web page in a week or two. The geoduck web page can be accessed at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/beachreg/2clam.htm>.

**May Razor Clam Opener:** The 2006-07 recreational razor clam season ended with the May 4-6 opener on the two beaches with clams remaining in their TAC (total allowable catch), Long Beach and Twin Harbors. A total of 20,400 digger trips were made and with the excellent weather and low surf conditions, the average catch was 14.7 clams per digger trip. Many compliments were received regarding the number of digging days, the large average size of the clams and in general the agency’s management of this fishery.



The 2006-07 recreational razor clam season comes to an end.

Since October a total of 260,000 digger trips were made and a total of 3.5 million razor clams were harvested.

Coastal shellfish staff will soon begin the annual coast wide razor clam stock assessment, starting the process of setting the 2007-08 season.

**Wenas Lake Update:** The Wenas Irrigation District agreed in writing to extending our land use agreement for the Wenas Lake public access for the remainder of 2007 in a letter dated May 7th. On May 11th, Naches Hatchery staff released 4,500 catchable rainbow trout (3 fish/lbs) in time for the Mother's Day weekend. State Senator Jim Clements, R (Selah), who brokered the interim agreement between WDFW and WID, was on hand to help release the fish. Senator Clements has pledged to help the two parties reach a long-term agreement by the end of the year. WDFW will stock another 4,400 catchables in early June prior to "Free Fishing Weekend" and the Naches High School Football Booster Club fund-raising fishing derby. Included in this June release will be 400 "jumbo catchables" (1 lbs ave. weight). Region 3 Fish Program staff will tag 10 of these jumbos for derby "prize winners".

**Kokanee Surprise on Opening Day:** Region 4 Inland Biologist Mark Downen received some very good news regarding fishing in Whatcom County following the year’s lowland lakes opener. Reports from Toad Lake specifically indicated a very successful fishery with over 100 anglers, many with their limit. What was not captured in the creel report was the number and size of kokanee taken in conjunction with the catchable rainbow plants. Many anglers were pleasantly surprised when they tied into these fabulous 14” plus kokanee considering the poor performance of the past plants. Downen indicated that these fish appear to be the successful result of a change in the planting regime from fry to fall fingerlings. In recent years Toad Lake has not been successful resulting in a bunch of small fish that were not well received. Like Toad Lake; Cascade, Padden and Samish are also receiving fall fingerling plants. Surveys of Cascade Lake last fall indicated that this regime was successful there also producing significant numbers of 16inch kokanee. Ultimately, Region 4 hopes to be able to utilize Cascade Lake as a source for Region-wide production needs.

**Edmonds Public Fishing Pier:** Thirty years ago the department, using funds from the IAC, constructed the public fishing pier at Edmonds, adjacent to the ferry landing. This pier has been a huge success, providing good fishing opportunities for salmon, bottomfish and squid as well as safe access for handicapped persons. While we constructed the pier, the day-to-day operation and maintenance has been done by the port and City of Edmonds. The agreement that allowed this joint operation has now expired and the pier is starting to show its age, with an estimated \$750,000 in repairs needed over the next few years. We are now faced with trying to obtain funds to renovate the pier and also to renew the working agreement with the port and City of Edmonds. Region 4 and fish program staff, are now working to find a solution. Both the port and the City of Edmonds are willing to support the renovation and continue operation of the pier, but are unwilling to commit any funds to the effort or to develop a grant proposal to obtain the funding. Agency staff is working to determine the appropriate role of the agency in the future of the Edmonds pier and develop a strategy to obtain funds for its continued operation.

**Clam Enhancement on Public Beaches:** Staff “seeded” four popular public beaches with hatchery-reared Manila clams this week in order to increase recreational harvest opportunity. Wolfe Property and Shine Tidelands State Parks near the Hood Canal Bridge received a total of 600,000 “seed”, which are expected to provide about 150,000 legal-sized clams in 2-3 years. Clam enhancement at these beaches has vastly improved recreational opportunity near the Seven Sisters Road access in recent years. This became especially important two years ago, when property deeds showed that a productive area of the Wolfe beach formerly thought to be State Parks land was actually private property. Staff planted 400,000 clam “seed” at Eagle Creek tidelands on the western shore of Hood Canal. Half of these clams were purchased by the Skokomish Tribe, which cooperated in the planting effort. Annual clam population surveys will be used to decide if seeding should continue at Eagle Creek, where silt problems resulting from a diversion of the creek may reduce survival of the juvenile clams. Staff and biologists from the Skokomish Tribe also planted 400,000 clam seed at Rendsland Creek on the eastern shore of Hood Canal. Citizen volunteers and Washington Sea Grant staff assisted us. The Skokomish Tribe purchased half of the clams. This effort is expected to produce 100,000 legal-sized clams in 2-3 years.

**Youth Fishing:** A new season of youth fishing activities is off and running, with three events conducted on April 14 and two more on April 21. About 1,200 kids enjoyed great fishing at Klineline Pond near Vancouver during the first Fishing Kids event of the year, kudos to Region 5 staff and about 100 volunteers for a smooth-running, successful day of fishing. The same day, Olympia staff coordinated with the Everett Steelhead and Salmon Club and City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department on fishing events involving 250 kids at North Gissberg Pond and 150 kids at Fircrest City Park. Two more Fishing Kids took place April 21, one at Seattle’s Green Lake and the other at Long Lake in Lacey. About 600 kids participated in each of those events and the majority went home with big smiles and their two-fish limit of 11-inch rainbow trout. Thanks to WDFW personnel from Region 4, Region 6 and Olympia, along with dozens of hard-working volunteers. Eleven more Fishing Kids events and about two-dozen other youth fishing activities are scheduled over the next two months.

**Ocean Spot Prawn At-Sea Sampling Trip:** WDFW Scientific Technician, John Beck, made a seven-day sampling trip aboard the Westport based spot prawn fishing vessel “The Watchman,” with Capt. Jerry “Corky” Tilley and crew, returning April 9. John was able to collect some excellent data on prawn size and fecundity and fishery by-catch that could only be collected at-sea. The Watchman fished spot prawn pot gear that had been set in the Nitinat Canyon, between 30 to 40 miles off the north Washington coast. The ocean spot prawn fishery remains an emerging commercial fishery and the limited number of permits is not transferable. The season opened March 15 and runs through September 15.

**Commercial Sea Cucumber Winter Fishery:** The “winter” non-Indian commercial sea cucumber fishery is currently in the thirteenth consecutive week of harvest. The 2006-2007 non-Indian commercial sea cucumber harvest management period ended April 30, 2007. Advisory Board members and managers are scheduled to convene April 13, 2007, to discuss the 2007-2008-harvest season. The Strait of Juan de Fuca area (District 2) and the Central Puget Sound area (District 3) quota shares have been achieved and the areas are closed for the remainder of the 2006-07-harvest management period. Harvest is currently allowed in the San Juan Island and South Puget Sound areas (Districts 1 and 5, respectively), Monday through Friday of each week. The Hood Canal area (District 4) remains closed to the commercial harvest of sea cucumbers, as a precautionary response to persistent low dissolved oxygen events.

The preliminary reported non-Indian commercial sea cucumber landings (and annual harvest quota shares) for the 2006-07-harvest season, through April 9, 2007, are as follows:

San Juan Island Area - District 1:	272,297 pounds (332,995 pound quota share)
Strait of Juan de Fuca Area - District 2:	77,387 pounds (78,000 pound quota share)
	Closed for the season
Central Puget Sound Area - District 3:	19,145 pounds (20,000 pound quota share)
	Closed for the season
Hood Canal Area- District 4:	Closed until further notice
South Puget Sound Area – District 5:	5,171 pounds (34,000 pound quota share)

**Coastal Dungeness Crab Buyback Committee:** IRM staff met with coastal commercial Dungeness crab industry representatives on April 26 to discuss recent legislation directing WDFW to develop a license buyback program. Program development will be a cooperative process between WDFW staff and industry representatives. This meeting focused on establishing a Buyback Committee and developing a process timeline. A report describing a proposed plan was due to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

**Tunk Valley Sharp-tailed Grouse:** Okanogan County opened a comment period on a Shoreline Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) determination for the expansion of a gravel pit in the Tunk Valley area. The pit, located on private land, was shown to be adjacent to two identified Sharp Tailed Grouse leks, although they had not been surveyed for several years. Because the SEPA comment period would end prior to the height of lek activity, AHB Connie Iten talked with Public Works staff and they agreed to negotiate mitigation after surveys were completed this year. Jeff Heinlen surveyed the leks and found that the establishment of a farm field had destroyed one of them, but the other was active and being used by more birds than any other in the area. WDFW staff then met with Public Works staff and the landowner and discussed ways to minimize the disturbance at the current site, and preferred locations for expansion or establishing new gravel mining sites.

## **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***

**2007-09 Operating Budget:** Final budget appropriated roughly \$347 million to the agency. This represents an increase of almost \$30 million from the 2005-07 Budget. While the Department made progress in a number of areas (salmonid monitoring, performance & accountability, hatchery O & M, etc.), a number of significant issues still exist. Most notably was the lack of funding for Selective Fisheries, the temporary backfill to the State Wildlife Account, and requirement to develop a fee supported HPA program.

**2007-09 Capital Budget:** Final budget appropriated roughly \$78 million to the Department, which includes new (\$67 million) and re-appropriated amounts (\$11 million). While the overall dollar amount provided to the agency was positive and included significant funding for Minor Works Projects (\$11 million), the focus continues to be on implementing recommendations of the Berk Report.

**2007 Supplemental Operating Budget:** WDFW is currently working with the Military Department to secure reimbursement of operating costs associated with the November 2006 flood event. The supplemental capital budget provided over \$800,000 in capital funds for damage to agency infrastructure.

**FY07 Audit of PR and DJ Funds:** The SAO is conducting the annual review of Dingell Johnson and Pittman Robertson grant funds.

**Willapa Bay Oyster Reserves:** Bid openings for the 2007 Willapa Bay Oyster Reserve sale were held on Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Willapa Bay Field Station. Six companies competed for eleven oyster picking tracts. All tracts were sold with prices ranging from \$2.07 to \$3.10 per bushel for the ten best tracts and one marginal bed sold for \$0.81 per bushel. Two companies bid on two wildstock manila clam tracts with winning bids of \$0.61 and \$0.62 per pound. Based on projected volume and bid prices this year's sale should generate around \$260,000. Picking for some companies should begin on the tide run starting May 14.

Willapa Bay Field Station staff completed the bedding out of 2,000 oyster seed bags onto state oyster reserve land to augment future production. This finishes the work started last month. A crew from the Department of Natural Resources that runs Naselle Youth Camp was utilized to move the remaining 700 bags. Although the bags did not get a commercial quantity set of oysters last summer, spat counts on the shell ranged from 0 to 5. Many of the camp "members" are inner city kids who have never been on a boat or on a tideflat and they asked lots of question about the various types of fish (sculpins, gunnels, midshipmen) and invertebrates (Dungeness, redrock crab, nerid worms, nudibranchs, etc.) that are found when working thru the shell bag piles. We plan on bringing them back later on this spring to make new oyster cultch bags that will be deployed in August to catch (hopefully) this year's oyster set.

**Landowner Incentive Program (LIP):** LIP staff received notification that Washington State has been awarded Tier 1 funding for 2007. Tier 1 funding is for administrative purposes and supports a staff of two people, a LIP Coordinator and a LIP Biologist.

**National Shooting Sports Foundation - Hunter Heritage Partnership Grant:** The Game Division submitted a Hunter Heritage Partnership Grant application to the National Shooting Sports Foundation to help fund the development of a new GoHunt map layer and an Internet-based reservation system for a new Quality Hunting Area program. The new program will identify public and private lands where good hunting opportunities exist and hunter densities are managed through a reservation system. This system will help address priorities that were identified during development of the 2003-09 Game Management Plan.

**Project Lynx:** Science staff has received peer review and editorial comments on two manuscripts submitted to the Journal of Wildlife Management. These two manuscripts previously received pre-submittal reviews by WDFW. The titles of the manuscripts are “Habitat fragmentation and persistence of lynx populations in Washington State” and “Winter habitat characteristics associated with lynx foraging behavior in Washington.” The first manuscript received minor comments and the second may require significant revisions. Co-authors are reviewing comments and revising both manuscripts.

## COMPETENCE GOAL:

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

**Enforcement Advisory Committee:** The Enforcement Advisory Committee met April 14 at Snoqualmie Pass. The agenda consisted of prioritizing committee objectives/projects, the WDFW rules process, and legislative session and budget updates. Captain Hebner and Nate Pamplin gave a presentation on tribal hunting issues and the proposed regional state/tribal management agreements. Enforcement staff in attendance included Bruce Bjork, Bill Jarmon, Bill Hebner, Sean Carrell, Kimberly Flowers, and Lori Preuss, several members of the Game Management Advisory Council and Commissioner Miranda. The next meeting is scheduled for June 16 in Ellensburg.

**Contaminated Fish Food:** WDFW was notified on May 8 some of the fish food we had purchased from Skretting, Canada was from the same lot number that the US Food and Drug Administration tested and determined to be positive for melamine at the ODFW Marion Forks hatchery. The feed had been shipped to six WDFW hatcheries and most of the implicated lot had already been fed to fish. However, we immediately discontinued the use of any remaining feed from that lot and substituted other available feeds. Melamine is the chemical that has been associated with the recent recall of pet food for dogs and cats.

On May 10, Skretting, Canada notified WDFW that as a precautionary move they were expanding their recall to include additional lot numbers of fish feed manufactured between December 2006 and March 2007. This feed had been shipped to an additional 43 WDFW hatcheries making a total of 49 WDFW facilities involved in the recall. All of the implicated feed was scheduled to be replaced by Friday, May 18. FDA officials have repeatedly stated that melamine is eliminated very quickly by the fish, and does not accumulate in fat or muscle tissue and that there is no significant health risk to humans who may eventually consume fish that received feed containing melamine. Currently the fish are being released as planned.

**State's first Youth Outdoor Adventure Expo:** Longview, Washington played host to this State's first Youth Outdoor Adventure Expo presented by WDFW, Camp Fire USA, Lower Columbia Council, and the Go Play Outside Alliance of Washington (GoPAW) on Friday and Saturday, May 18th and 19th. Approximately 3,400 students, teachers, parent volunteers, home-schoolers, and their families participated on Friday, and just under 3,000 attendees, many of them "repeaters", kept a steady flow through the gates on Saturday. Special guest attendees included Director Koenings, Enforcement Chief Bjork, and Region 5 Director Guy Norman.

This was an enormously successful public/private partnership event aimed at exposing youth and families to outdoor recreation opportunities and providing guidance to further mentoring possibilities.

We were mobbed! More schools showed up than had registered. Several exhibitors who had been committed did not appear, but several new exhibitors also materialized wanting display space. The people who had used the rock wall prior to our event, damaged the "launching foot" so even after extraordinary efforts by the Army, it could not be used. We were creative; we were flexible, all problems were resolved while they were small.

The Canoe/Kayak Pond (a never-before tried by us temporary activity) had a line from opening to closing both days, as did our tried-and-true crowd favorites: the Catch and Release Fishing Ponds and the Target Range.

Shellfish Dive staff collected a variety of marine invertebrate species including crabs, anemones, urchins, nudibranchs, sea stars, giant barnacles, and scallops for the WDFW Outreach Group. These animals were displayed and used in a "touch tank." Region 6 staff from the Point Whitney Lab, including Boat Operator Brian McLaughlin, provided vessel and logistic support for the dive collection. This is a good example of cross-project cooperation to achieve a valued agency outreach and education objective.

Everyone had a great experience. We did exit surveys on Saturday that we hope to analyze this week. On Friday, teachers were provided with Pre, during, and post attendance activity plans, one of which includes a student survey of "likes and dislikes" as well, which should start appearing in the mail next week.

This event generated an incredible amount of goodwill and enthusiasm among both attendees and volunteers. Well done to all who lent their energy to the cause!

**Earth Day Shellfish Booth:** Shellfish staff from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory in Brinnon presented a live shellfish display at Port Townsend's Earth Day - Every Day fair. The emphasis of the presentation was on teaching sustainable shellfish harvesting practices. Visitors were especially pleased with the free clam and crab gauges we distributed. Shell fishing site pamphlets, maps and DOH literature were also very popular, and the 2007/08 Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet arrived just in time to distribute at this event. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive and the iced critter display continues to be a big hit with kids and adults.

**Cedar River Spring Sampling Delayed:** The spring sampling for WDFW's Monitoring and Evaluation of Fish Predation on Listed Juvenile Chinook Salmon in the Lake Washington Basin study will not occur this year due to the delayed arrival of a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) permit to conduct these activities. This study was approved and permitted under a King County permit for the Summer 2006 sampling, and fieldwork was accomplished successfully. Unfortunately, King County's permit expired last December and could not be utilized for Winter-Spring 2007 sampling. Since this was a new study involving boat electro-fishing not covered under existing WDFW permits, a modification to include the Cedar River sampling project to the existing Section 10 warm-water sampling permit was submitted to NOAA Fisheries on November 3, 2006. Due to NOAA's 6-month extension from D.C. to address permitting backlog, NMFS does not anticipate approval and authorization for the Cedar River

sampling project until June 2007. Summer sampling is anticipated to commence for the Cedar River project in 2007.

**Crab Fishing Rules Quiz:** Shellfish staff from the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory collaborated with local photographer and videographer, Ann Welch, to collect Dungeness and red rock crab for a photo shoot. Images and videos, including clips showing how to properly measure crab, will be used to design a recreational crab fishing rules quiz for the Department's web site. It is hoped that this informative and entertaining quiz will help educate crabbers about current regulations and reduce the number of warnings and citations enforcement personnel must issue.

**Project Burrow:** The Warden School District staff and students are assisting Region 2 and Olympia staff researchers and biologists to understand ground squirrel and burrowing owl behavior. Warden School District staff and student volunteers have reported numerous sightings of Washington ground squirrels and pups on the school site. This is an exciting time for monitoring behavior and the numbers of squirrels. Ann Marks, one of the lead 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers was quoted as saying, "The squirrels are definitely out in full force. Right when we got back from Spring break, we observed adults with pups in all areas. By the end of the week more pups appeared. The students are excited to finally see the difference between an adult and pups. My class is observing Wednesday and Friday of each week and are keeping track of sightings." The students are also monitoring burrowing owls on the school property. There is currently one confirmed pair inhabiting one artificial burrow at the site, and one unconfirmed sighting on a single owl.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek Surveys:** Of note, a historic sharp-tailed grouse lek site was found to still be active after 14 years of not being surveyed. Eighteen birds were found on the lek, which is the highest count in Tunk Valley this year. The landowner assisted in the survey and has taken a great liking to these birds over the years. He has read about the birds and has done much on his own to provide good habitat for them. A good relationship has been started with this landowner that hopefully will continue in the future.

**Box Canyon (Pend Oreille River) Streambank Guidelines:** Jeff Lawlor (AHB, Spokane) and a consultant completed the Box Canyon (Pend Oreille River) Streambank Protection Guidelines. Jeff successfully applied for this grant, and this is the culmination of nearly a year of intense work. It uses WDFW's Integrated Streambank Protection Guidelines as a basis, but applies it specifically to the common problems found in Box Canyon Reservoir. This document will be made available to the county and will assist them and private landowners in evaluating sites for streambank protection. Jeff has applied for a second phase of this project that will allow for additional printing of the document and provide training for area contractors, county staff and private citizens. This is an innovative and collaborative solution to the numerous inadequate streambank projects that have been taking place in Pend Oreille County.

{tc |1 2 "DISTRICT BIOLOGISTS "}

## **SCIENCE GOAL:**

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

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Education and Emphasis Patrols:** WDFW's AIS Officers conducted aquatic invasive training to 67 WDFW employees in Ellensburg this spring. It was learned that an Oregon-registered boat recently visited Sacramento, California. The boat had not been decontaminated prior to leaving California. As the Sacramento area is notorious as a home for the deleterious Mitten Crab, the boat underwent a required cleaning before it was allowed into Washington State waters. This is the level of diligence that is needed to prevent the introduction of exotics into our waters. Subsequently, AIS Officers have planned and implemented several major AIS-emphasis patrols. 1) One operation required 32 Officers in 5 major operational areas of eastern Washington. Major recreational waters from Lake Chelan to Moses Lake, Lake Roosevelt, and both the Snake and Columbia Rivers were targeted. This operation was both educational and enforcement in nature. Well over 200 boat inspections were conducted, educational material and advice on prevention of zebra mussels (and other AIS) was distributed to hundreds of water enthusiasts. Boaters were truly happy to see us inspecting boats and providing a strong presence on boat launches. 2) At the Ridgefield Port of Entry a boat was de-contaminated prior to letting it into Washington waters. This boat was the third of three houseboats purchased in Missouri for use on freshwater lakes in British Columbia. The other two boats had slipped through without proper AIS inspections. The boat de-contamination was captured on film by three Portland area TV stations. Oregon DFW has asked for a copy of our regulations to model theirs after. 3) A vessel was contacted with zebra muscles and de-contaminated in LaConner prior to being launched in Washington waters. The owner was very appreciative of our Department's efforts.

**Mole Business Cases:** After repeated warnings and complaints from other similar business owners, officers delivered two illegal mole-trapping business cases to the King County Prosecutor's Office for review and filing. Officers contacted a residence in Sammamish where one suspect was still trapping moles despite all enforcement actions and media coverage. One resident is very upset that the suspect continues trapping contrary to state law, and subsequently, put a stop payment on the check she paid him with. The prosecutor's office assisted in moving the case along and securing a performance bond to convince the suspect from continuing to operate illegally. Subsequently, WDFW's Assistant Attorney General is defending an action by the opposing attorney to obtain a restraining order against the state to enforce the provisions of RCW 77.15.194 as it relates to moles. The defendant filed a lawsuit against the agency alleging his federal constitutional rights have been violated.

**Officer Assists with Highway Accident:** Officer Alexander responded to the scene of a two-car accident in Malone on SR 12 to assist the Washington State Patrol (WSP) with road closure. The male driver of one of the vehicles involved was a department employee who works out of the Montesano Office. The employee survived the collision, was transported to the hospital. A mother and her 4-year-old daughter were instantly killed in the other vehicle after she crossed the centerline and hit the department vehicle head on. A 19-month-old girl in the car was flown to Harborview and was listed in satisfactory condition.

**Aid in Serious Auto Accident:** Officer Krenz was one of the first to arrive on the scene of a serious accident just seconds after the impact involving a school bus and a Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV). The bus driver had, according to an eyewitness, driven through a red light at a new traffic signal and t-boned the SUV. The bus pushed the vehicle into a field. The SUV engine compartment had caught on fire and the passenger area was filling with smoke as the eyewitness was trying to open the jammed driver's door to free the driver. Officer Krenz saw this and broke the driver's side window and he and the witness pulled the woman out of the smoke filled vehicle to safety. At the same time, a water truck driver from a nearby construction site arrived and put out the car fire with a fire hose that he hooked up to the tanker. The young woman, who advised that she was pregnant as she was being extracted from the SUV, was placed in the eyewitness's vehicle. Officer Krenz then called for aid and the Covington Police. Officer Krenz went to the bus (no children on board) and witnessed the bus driver, who could not exit through the front door due to damage, come out through the emergency exit in the rear of the bus and he then placed her in the patrol vehicle until aid arrived. Neither driver was seriously injured.

**Life Saving Event:** Officer Johnson and Lieutenant Nicks worked the low land lake opener on Pierce County lakes. While they were on Clear Lake, a canoe tipped over and the two male occupants went into the water. Lt. Nicks and Officer Johnson pulled them out of the water. There were no personal flotation devices on board the canoe.

**Enforcement Present at Community Event:** Officer Olson attended the annual CAST FOR KIDS event at Green Lake in Seattle. Over 600 kids attended and caught fish with their new fishing poles. Officer Olson made six different presentations on how and why to wear life preservers. He also discussed the duties of a Fish and Wildlife Officer with approximately 100 kids at a time. After the talks, Officer Olson offered a tour of his Enforcement vehicle including a cougar skull and antlers for inspection.

**Enforcement's Chief for a Day:** The annual 'Chief for a Day' event was held in Wenatchee. This event is sponsored by multiple law enforcement agencies to include challenged youngsters who may have an interest in law enforcement but may not get the chance to grow up to pursue a lot of things that we take for granted. This year the Enforcement Program sponsored 7-year-old Lexi as our 'Chief For a Day'. Lexi lives in Entiat with her mother and sister. Chief Bjork introduced Lexi at the opening day celebration of the Wenatchee Apple Blossom Festival. The Chief pinned on Lexi's badge and she immediately started giving orders to attending Fish and Wildlife Officers.

**Black Bear Complaint Season:** Captain Hebner and Sergeant Chandler worked with Allison Grande of KIRO TV News on a proactive public service announcement regarding how to avoid black bear problems and tips on how to successfully coexist. The piece included an interview with Sergeant Chandler as he responded to a bear call in Issaquah where a bruin tore open a shed to get at the garbage inside. The coverage will assist WDFW staff in spreading the word to the public about prevention of black bear problems and how to solve problems (self-help) if they begin to occur. Captain Hebner also worked with Elisa Jaffe of KOMO News 4 on a separate black bear public service announcement.

**Improved Ringold Steelhead Smolt Release:** Estimating the number of steelhead smolts released from the Ringold Springs Rearing Facility (RSRF) 5-acre earthen pond has been a difficult, inaccurate process. Until this spring, there was no feasible method for estimating effective (net) smolt production that was not labor intensive or unreasonably stressful to the smolts. Consequently, the release estimate was based on the gross number of fish transferred from the vinyl raceways to the pond in the fall, minus estimated mortality from disease and predation (birds, otters, etc.). Avian predation losses at Ringold from fall-to-spring can be substantial and difficult to estimate with any certainty due to the proximity to large numbers of over-wintering migratory birds on the Hanford Reach National Monument. This uncertainty regarding rearing pond mortality made it very difficult for Region 3 Fish Management staff to forecast expected adult steelhead return back to RSRF for the lower Hanford Reach steelhead fishery. This year, an inoperable Smith-Root, Inc. electronic impedance fish counter that the Priest Rapids Complex owned was repaired and deployed in the concrete flume downstream of the 5-acre pond outlet structure. Fish were initially allowed to voluntarily migrate out of the pond and later encouraged to migrate by gradually drawing down the pond depth/volume. The fish counter worked very well and 258,200 smolts left the pond out of an original fall transfer of 350,000 parr (74% parr-to-smolt yield). Total mortality was approximately 92,000 fish, of which the majority was bird predation caused by double-crested cormorants, herons, egrets, mergansers and other fish-eating birds. This high-level of predation occurred despite intense hazing efforts by hatchery staff and implementation of a limited kill permit by the USDA - Wildlife Control Services to reduce cormorant predation. The 5-acre pond is too large to be covered by bird netting to prevent predation. PRC staff is recommending that the pond area/volume be reduced by 50% so that a cost-effective bird cover can be constructed.

**Paper Comparing Stress Response In Hand- and Automatically-Vaccinated Coho Juveniles Published:** Juvenile Coho salmon were subjected to automated and hand injection procedures, and their cortisol response to the procedures and a secondary stress challenge (a one-hour confinement) was compared. Both the hand and automated procedures elicited a variable but significant stress response and, after one-hour, decreased the ability of the fish to respond to the second challenge. After 24 hours, the fish subjected to the automated procedure fish responded to a stress challenge. Fish subjected to the hand injection procedure lacked a cortisol response to the stress challenge. This indicates that the hand injection procedure had a protracted negative effect and suggests that the automatic injection system is a superior method for administering injections to juvenile salmonids. The reference is: Sharpe, C.S. 2007. Physiological Stress Responses to Automated and Hand Vaccine Injection Procedures in Yearling Coho Salmon. *North American Journal of Aquaculture* 69:180-184, 2007.

**Razor Clam Growth Study:** Fieldwork associated with the on-going razor clam growth and mortality studies continued last week in both the Long Beach and Copalis razor clam reserves. Clams that had been marked in March 2006 were recovered and the observed growth rates were higher than expected. This five-year study is promising to yield some very solid results that will likely have a positive impact on the management of the fishery.

**2007 Conference of Research in Georgia Basin and Puget Sound March 26-30, 2007:**

PSAMP Fish Contaminant Unit attended the 2007 Conference of Research in Georgia Basin and Puget Sound March 26 – 30, 2007, and are currently preparing extended abstracts for publication in the conference proceedings. Sandie O’Neill gave two oral presentations, one on the importance of fish life history and biology in assessing contaminant levels in Pacific salmon and the other on the contribution of biota to the total loadings to PCB to Puget Sound. Jim West gave an oral presentation of temporal changes in contaminants in Puget Sound fishes. Steve Quinnell presented a poster on movement patterns of English sole as they relate to contaminant exposure. Titles of the presentation were:

O’Neill, S. M., West, J. E and G. M. Ylitalo. Contaminants in Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp*): The importance of fish biology in assessing sources from the Pacific Ocean vs. regional contribution from coastal waters of Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin.

O’Neill, S. M and J. E. West. PCBs in the biota: Are they important estimating loadings to Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin?

O’Neill, S. M., M. L. Moser, M. S. Myers, S. R. Quinnell and J. E. West. Acoustic telemetry reveals daily movement patterns and annual homing migration to foraging habitats by English sole: Application to management of contaminated sediments.

West, J. E. and S. M. O’Neill. Thirty years of Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxics in Puget Sound Fishes

**Paper About Respawning Of Males And Effective Number Accepted:** A paper entitled “The Impact of Repeat Spawning of Males on Effective Number of Breeders in Hatchery Operations” by Craig Busack has been accepted by the journal Aquaculture. The paper extends commonly used equations for effective number of breeders to account for repeat use of some males, which is a common situation in conservation hatchery operations. It was obvious that repeat use of males decreased somewhat the effective number; with the equations in this paper, hatchery managers can make decisions about repeat spawning versus the effort required to collect additional broodstock. Although the paper was written specifically with repeat spawning of male salmonids in mind, it is applicable to other species and other situations.

**State Weed Coordinators Meeting:** Dave Heimer attended the annual meeting of Washington’s weed coordinators. The meeting was attended by county coordinators who discussed weed issues and heard presentations by guest speakers. Dave spoke with several coordinators and shared suggestions after a weed mapping standardization presentation. The presentation outlined the State Weed Board’s attempt at developing a weed geodatabase, similar to what Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW are already developing. There may be an opportunity for collaboration that could result in cost and timesaving for all agencies.

**Meetings and Conferences:** Joe Buchanan and John Pierce attended a spotted owl/barred owl workshop funded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Fort Collins, Colorado. Those attending the workshop included experts in spotted owl ecology and statistical design. The main purpose was to develop an effective research design to estimate the cause and effect relationship that barred owls may have on spotted owls density, survival, and/or reproductively.

**Project CAT:** Science staff and Project CAT graduate students Benjamin Maletzke (Ph.D. student at Washington State University) and Paul Houghtaling (Masters of Science student at Central Washington University) met with Dr. Rob Wielgus's staff and graduate students at the Washington State University Large Carnivore Lab to discuss cougar research in northeast Washington and the Cle Elum study areas. The group discussed data analysis and timelines for graduate completion for Ben and Hilary Cooley (a Ph.D. student comparing demographics of northeast and Cle Elum cougar populations). They also discussed the timelines for publications and beginning analysis and submittal of manuscripts in 2007. Washington State University is providing Kevin White, a Teacher's Assistant for Fall and Spring Semester 2007-08, to pursue a Masters of Science in Natural Resources. He will take course work and begin analysis for his thesis of the cougar predation data collected from investigating kill sites on Project CAT from 2001-2007. We have data on habitat and physiographic features; sex, species, age, and condition of species killed; and age and sex of cougars associated with kill locations at approximately 200 kill site locations.

## **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.*

**Patrol Horse Passes Away:** The Enforcement Program's most reliable and trusted 25+ year-old patrol horse, Buck, died of natural causes at the Methow Wildlife Area. Officers were there to fix fencing and he died while our personnel looked on. The likely cause of death was his advanced years. Buck was known to a great many WDFW personnel from several programs, and carried many officers and biologists on treks into various backcountry areas all over the state. He was even-tempered and always got the job done, even in some really difficult circumstances.

**Rick Stilwater, Region 2 Complex Manager Announces Retirement:** Rick Stilwater has been the foundation of Region 2 Hatchery Operations, anchoring our HCP and resident production. He has contributed to WDFW with class and integrity for several decades and will be sorely missed. Rick's last day with WDFW will be July 31.

**Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (UCRTT) Chairman:** Casey Baldwin, of the Conservation Biology Unit, has accepted the chairperson position for the Upper Columbia Regional Technical Team (UCRTT). The UCRTT is an interdisciplinary group of natural resource professionals providing technical guidance to the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board regarding salmonid habitat, biology, and recovery. The UCRTT's primary functions are to rate the technical merits of habitat restoration and protection projects, set ESU level priorities, and coordinate monitoring efforts for the Upper Columbia. WDFW will benefit from having Casey lead the UCRTT because his experience with sub-basin plans, recovery plans, and Technical Recovery Team (TRT) viability criteria will help focus the restoration efforts on the actions that will have the most benefit for listed salmonids. Casey's selection is also a reflection of the quality effort he and WDFW in general have put forth in this area of the state.

**Fish Program Management Team Site Visits:** Several members of the Fish Program Management Team spent one day this week visiting some sites in Region 6. The first stop was the Pt. Whitney Shellfish Laboratory on Hood Canal where an informal meeting was held with staff as a "meet and greet" and to provide staff an opportunity to ask questions or express concern. The meeting was well attended, participation was high and proved beneficial for both staff and management. The second site visit that day was the Hood Canal Hatchery and then onto the George Adams Hatchery, where both hatcheries were actively clipping adipose fins off baby Chinook. A few members of the management team took advantage of a great hands-on learning opportunity and performed some clipping as well!



*Washington Department of*  
***FISH and WILDLIFE***