

DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

May 8-9, 2009

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

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

Large Hydraulics Violation Yields Heavy Equipment Seizure: Regional Habitat staff and Okanogan County Enforcement Officers reviewed a severe hydraulics violation on Salmon Creek in Okanogan County. Over 300 feet of stream system containing Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed steelhead trout, resident trout, and other local fish life was dredged with an excavator and tractor, and many gabion baskets were installed (after being filled with streambed materials). An illegal bridge was also constructed over the watercourse. All of these occurred without a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) or any other local, state, or federal permits. Since the violator (a former Okanogan County Prosecuting Attorney) was extremely uncooperative, a search warrant was obtained and a camera (with pictures of the violation occurring), a CAT ski-steer tractor, and a CAT mini excavator were all seized. Subsequently, the seized equipment was transported to the Region 2 Enforcement impound yard to await disposition of the case. Regional staff wrote a detailed violation and damage report that should aid greatly in this case, if and when it goes to trial.

NMFS Proposes ESA Listing for Three Species of Rockfish in Puget Sound: On April 22, NMFS announced a proposal to give ESA protection to three species of rockfish in the Georgia Basin (e.g., Puget Sound and the southern portion of British Columbia, east of Vancouver Island). Two species, yelloweye and canary rockfish, are proposed for "threatened" status; and the third, bocaccio, is proposed for "endangered" status. NMFS determined that the major threats to these species of rockfish are fishing, abandoned fishing gear, and pollution. NMFS will accept comments on the proposed listing until June 22, 2009. A final decision will be made in one year.

Charges Filed in "Tinsel Town" Poaching Case: Officers filed 380 charges (including 32 felonies, 196 GM, 152 M) on five suspects in the poaching of thirteen deer and two elk in Kittitas County. The charges stem from the poaching ring in Kittitas. A wide variety of charges including felon in possession of firearms, possession of marijuana, use of drug paraphernalia, unlawful hunting big game 1st, unlawful hunting big game 2nd, spotlighting (1st and 2nd degree), wastage, hunting with the aid of motor vehicle, criminal conspiracy, and false information were included in the case file. Officers met with the superior court prosecutor regarding the charges. She was disgusted with the number of wasted animals and assured Officers that she would remain in contact with them as the case proceeds forward.

Partnerships Mean Success for Johnson Creek Fish Passage Projects: Many Washington streams with state owned culverts located during the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) inventory have problems that go well beyond a single state route barrier. Multiple human made blockages, under different ownerships, found during upstream or downstream investigations are some of the more common difficulties. Although the Department has no program to correct these non-state-owned fish passage barriers, partnering efforts with multiple jurisdictions can be an effective means to address these issues. Johnson Creek/Wirrkala Ponds, near Naselle, is one example of a broader approach to correcting multiple culvert barriers. Four barriers have been corrected by four jurisdictions teaming up to provide salmon passage to high quality reaches in Johnson Creek and Wirrkala Ponds. The first barriers fixed were two concrete round culverts on State Route 4. This barrier was replaced by WSDOT with an arch in 2002. Following that, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) replaced a badly perched culvert on the logging road 100 meters upstream with a concrete bridge. Department staff worked on a design for a repair for the outlet channels, culvert, and spill apron of the two small lakes upstream, known as Wirrkala Ponds. However, the Department needed a partner to complete this project. The Technical Applications Division contacted the Pacific County Conservation District who picked up the project and brought it to completion. Now, for the first time in decades, Johnson/Wirrkala is passable to salmonids from the mouth to the headwaters.

	
<p>Culvert replacement under logging road – Wirrkala Pond B</p>	<p>Newly constructed outlet channel upstream of culvert</p>
	
<p>Restored outlet channel from Wirrkala Pond B</p>	<p>Newly constructed outlet channel from Wirrkala Pond A; fish passage barrier metal apron structure was removed</p>

Western Pond Turtle Management: Western pond turtle trapping is going well at Sondino Ponds in Klickitat County. The field team has caught a grand total of 160 turtles. Transmitters were placed on 20 females, ensuring another successful season for the “head start” program. One wild hatchling was placed with the 2008 "head start" group at the Oregon Zoo. All 2008 turtles from the Oregon Zoo will be released in the Columbia River Gorge this summer.

Gray Wolf: The Governor is extremely concerned by an alleged illegal killing of a gray wolf that occurred last year in Eastern Washington, as she believes wolves are an important part of our state’s ecosystem. Gray wolves are protected as an endangered species under Washington State law and under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Enforcement Officers are fully engaged in collecting evidence and evaluating the extent of any criminal activity associated with harming our gray wolf population. Once the investigative process is complete, case files will be forwarded to federal and/or state prosecutors for review and charging decisions.

Burrowing Owls: Wildlife Program staff checked the occupancy of several burrowing owl sites in Benton and Franklin counties. The sites were last formally surveyed in 2005 and were active. Benton County had 6 of 28 (21%) burrows occupied and Franklin County had 5 of 32 (16%) burrows occupied by owls. The immediate areas surrounding the burrows were examined for unknown owl burrows. This effort documented two recently occupied burrows. The primary explanation for lack of occupancy was burrow collapse. Of particular concern is the near disappearance of owls at the Pasco Railroad Yard and surrounding area. Where there were roughly 12 active burrows in 2005, there is now one active burrow.

Razor Clam Opener: The three-day mid-April recreational razor clam opener was both blessed and cursed by the weather. The Friday digging at Twin Harbors and the Saturday digging at Long Beach and Twin Harbors beaches all coincided with excellent springtime weather and low surf conditions. On Saturday alone a total of 8,300 diggers were out on the two open beaches harvesting 121,200 clams – or 14.8 clams per digger, very close to the 15-day daily bag limit. On Sunday, the final day of these three-day openers, only 3,100 diggers braved heavy rain, strong winds, and high surf to dig a total of 25,300 clams - 8.2 clams per digger. As is generally the case, razor clam digging success hinges more on weather conditions than most any other factor. Based on recently updated razor clam fishery economic information, it is estimated that the total of 13,600 digger trips made during this two-beach opener generated a total of \$680,000 of extra income to the small communities located on the Washington coast.

Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) Projects: The Klickitat Wildlife Area (KWA) Manager met with a DNR roads specialist to inspect a completed project that will fulfill KWA RMAP requirements. Additionally, the Wildlife Area manager worked with a Master Hunter candidate to layout volunteer project work in accordance with RMAP needs. The volunteer assisted with preparation for a fencing project, road maintenance, and tree cage removal. While these are small projects individually, they are each important and the help is greatly appreciated.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council): The Council met in Anchorage from April 1-7. The principal agenda item was the establishment of a framework for managing chinook bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. Although the pollock fishery has very low levels of bycatch in general, it does intercept varying amounts of chinook from many points of origin, ranging from the western Alaska rivers to some lower 48 stocks, including a handful of coded-wire tag recoveries of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed Columbia River chinook. Recent high levels of bycatch (peaking at over 120,000 in 2007) have generated a high level of concern about the effect of this mortality on many weak stocks. Consequently, the Council spent over three days on this issue, and heard testimony from 200+ members of the public. The Council voted unanimously to provide an upper level hard cap of 60,000 chinook annually, with a performance measure of 47,500 chinook, not to be exceeded more than three times in seven years. The pollock industry proposed two different individual vessel incentive plans designed to reduce chinook bycatch even further below the performance measure level, particularly in years when chinook encounters are low. The Council favorably reviewed these incentive plans, expects them to be implemented, and will receive annual reports on their efficacy. Both plans are innovative, and untested, but received very positive independent review by fishery economists and the Council's Science and Statistics Committee. The other agenda item was adoption of a measure to establish Pacific cod endorsements for the federal fishery permits for pot, longline, and jig vessels that have landed more than a minimal level of Pacific cod in the last six years. This action restricts a large number of federal licenses from engaging in directed fishing for Pacific cod, effectively creating a closed class of cod fishers in the fixed gear sector, similar to a measure the Council recently adopted for trawl gear in the Gulf of Alaska. The sectors have requested the Council restrict the number of potential participants in cod fisheries before adopting fixed allocations to each of the sectors (sector splits).

Abalone Restoration Program: The Central Shellfish Dive Team recently completed surveys of abalone index stations in the San Juan Archipelago. This is the seventh survey over the past two decades. The 2009 data shows a 17% decline from 2006 surveys. Overall, 2009 data represents an 83% decline in abalone abundance when compared with initial 1992 survey data. Dramatic declines have continued despite the closure of the abalone fishery in 1994. The mean shell length of live abalone in our 2009 survey is equal to the mean shell length of all empty (mortality) shells recovered from our sites. There is little evidence of recruitment.

Estuary Habitat Memorandum of Agreement (MOA): Washington State representatives from the Governor's Office, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and the Department recently negotiated a MOA with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and Bureau of Reclamation to fund habitat restoration activities in the Columbia River Estuary. The federal action agencies will fund over \$40 million in fish habitat enhancements over the next nine years (2010 to 2018) – with a goal of enhancing survival of listed stocks of anadromous salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act and implementing estuary commitments described in the 2008 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion. The Department will lead efforts to identify and rank the priority of potential habitat enhancement actions from the mouth of the Columbia River to Bonneville Dam, including lower tributary reaches having tidal influence. The Department and partners will then sponsor on-the-ground projects that will be funded using matching BPA (35%) and USACE (65%) dollars.

Proposed Dams on Chehalis River: Two new dams are being proposed in the Chehalis River by the Lewis County PUD, primarily for flood control, but also for power generation. The preliminary “Study of Chehalis River Basin Water Retention Potential” was presented to Ecology and the Department on March 25, and extensive follow-up studies are planned to evaluate feasibility. Preliminary work by the project consultant identified two potential dam locations, one in the upper Chehalis above Pe Ell, and the other in the upper South Fork. Both of these locations are in anadromous waters. Department staff have raised concerns with impacts to many miles of salmonid habitat, including most of the spawning habitat in the upper Chehalis system. A cost-benefit analysis prepared by the consultant showed benefits that included enhancement of summer low flows and economic benefits from increased salmonid production. A placeholder figure of \$10 million dollars for “mitigation” was included in the cost of each dam. Department staff asked for additional information on benefits to salmonids from dam construction and the adequacy of the mitigation figure relative to the costs of fish passage, consideration of the high cost of moveable spillway weirs, collection and transport of adults, and replacement of potentially many river miles of spawning habitat. Fish passage was not considered in the preliminary report, but will be considered in the next phase of the study, along with an in-depth look at impacts to salmonid habitat. A geotechnical analysis of the underlying sediments is also underway. If the underlying sediments preclude safe and feasible construction, then the project will probably not happen. If the geotechnical analysis supports project feasibility, the next project task will include a detailed evaluation and impacts of dam construction and operation to fish and wildlife resources. This phase of the study will require significant Department participation.

PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Opening Day of Lowland Lake Season: Saturday, April 25, was “Opening Day” of the fishing season for many lowland lakes across the state. Several hundred lakes were stocked with millions of hatchery-reared fish before the big day. This included over 41,000 triploid (sterile) trout averaging 1½ pounds each, over 69,000 two-year old “jumbo” and surplus hatchery broodstock, over 7 million trout fry, 8.5 million kokanee planted earlier for this year’s fishery, and 4.1 million “catchable size” (8- to 12-inch) trout stocked this spring. The weather was blustery in many areas, but anglers who did venture out found relatively good catch rates and a lot of larger fish in their catch.

Creel checks performed by staff and volunteers reported that 5,410 anglers were checked, with 12,497 trout taken from 121 lakes, statewide. This averages out to 2.3 trout per angler at lakes with a 5 trout daily limit. The top ten lakes for angler success were: Williams and Badger Lakes-Spokane County; Horseshoe and Island Lakes- Kitsap County; Pearrygin Lake-Okanogan County; Erie Lake-Skagit County; Steel Lake-King County; Howard Lake-Snohomish County; Silver Lake-Whatcom County; and Cedar Lake-Stevens County.

2009-10 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet: The 2009-10 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet was finalized and submitted to the printer. The pamphlet was distributed to dealers and is also available online at: (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/hunter/hunter.htm>).

Yakima River Spring Chinook Fishery: On April 29, Fish Program staff received notice that the Yakama Nation (YN) Fish, Wildlife, and Law and Order Committee (FWLO) has tentatively decided to reject the Department's request to open the YN "reservation boundary reach" (SR 223 Granger Bridge to just below Sunnyside Dam) to non-tribal sport fishing for hatchery spring chinook (second year in a row). YN Fishery Management staff cited FWLO anger over what has transpired in the lower Columbia River sport and non-Indian commercial fisheries, lack of chinook returns to Bonneville Dam, and the meager catch-to-date for the Zone 6 tribal fisheries. A similar situation of the lower non-tribe/tribe river fisheries occurred last year.

The Department is still planning to open a mark-selective sport fishery for Cle Elum Hatchery spring chinook upstream of the YN reservation between Union Gap and Roza Dam. This fishery will likely open by emergency rule in mid-May to give late migrating fish an opportunity to travel the 107 miles from the mouth of the Yakima River to the lower fishery boundary at the I-82 Bridge at Union Gap. Loss of the YN boundary reaches downstream cuts the fishing area in half and will reduce harvest because the most productive water borders the reservation. Nevertheless, the public will benefit from having a chinook fishery in the Yakima urban-area (Union Gap, Yakima, Selah) for the second year in a row. This decade, the Department has been able to open spring chinook fisheries 6 out of 10 years (2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2009).

Oyster Enhancement: Staff planted 300 bags of hatchery-reared Pacific oyster "seed" at the Department's West Penn Cove Tidelands. We were assisted by Region 4 shellfish staff and citizen volunteers. This effort should produce 270,000 harvestable-sized oysters in two years. Previous seeding at this beach has been very popular with recreational harvesters and we received many kudos for pursuing shellfish enhancement projects.

Staff also planted 400 bags of Pacific oyster "seed" each at Potlatch and Wolfe Property State Parks. This effort will produce 720,000 harvestable-sized oysters in three years.

Wooten Area Addition: The Department has completed the purchase of a 186-acre inholding to the Wooten Wildlife Area, located in Columbia and Garfield counties, south of the town of Pomeroy. The Tucannon River flows through this property. The native vegetation includes scattered conifers on the hillsides, deciduous trees in the riparian areas, annual and perennial grasses, shrubs and forbs. Acquisition of this property allows fuller implementation of the Wildlife Area Management Plan and preserves its grassland and riparian habitat, along with providing additional public recreational opportunities. The purchase was funded by Puget Sound Energy's Hopkins Ridge Windpower Mitigation agreement and a grant from the USFWS.

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

Grants: There were three notable grants recently approved:

- 1) The USFWS awarded the Wildlife Area Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Project a \$741,034 grant for continued work in 2010. This grant funds the fifth year of an HCP process for the state's wildlife areas covering a total of approximately 900,000 acres. The HCP will offer benefits to more than 50 listed and at-risk species and land users by providing certainty that land management activities meet federal species protection requirements.
- 2) National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) will contract paperwork to the Department for a \$24,000 grant for Gertrude Island/South Puget Sound harbor seal research. This was approved and is being processed by NMML/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries for this year's work.
- 3) An Intermountain West Joint Venture grant will provide \$15,000 per year for up to three years to hire a laborer to support the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - State Areas for Wildlife Enhancement programs. This grant was advanced in partnership with the Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District and two non-governmental organizations. The Department will be the lead agency in both Lincoln and Whitman counties. The Joint Venture is focused on bird conservation in the Intermountain West, however, the habitat objectives that serve birds corresponds well with the Department's habitat objectives on private lands.

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) Grant: The Fish Program received a \$75,000 grant from the PSMFC to conduct a pilot project to determine the feasibility of accepting electronic fish tickets. We will also design/build/test the process of importing, loading, validating, and exporting electronic fish ticket data. The PSMFC will implement a trawl rationalization program in 2011. The success of this program will rely heavily on a quick and accurate turn around for landing information. Our pilot project is an effort to support the coastal fishery management needs.

Fisheries Information System (FIS) Research Project: Our proposal (developing an adaptive optimal sampling strategy from analysis of sardine logbook data) in response to the FIS Data Quality Project request for proposal was selected for funding. FIS/NOAA will provide details on the level to which we will be funded once the budget is received for this year. Pacific sardines (or pilchards) are managed under the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery management plan and are an important commercial fishery in California, Oregon, and Washington. Current sampling protocol is linked to the volume of landings by port that may not be reflective of catch area, causing bias in biological sampling. The objectives are: 1) to standardize Washington sardine logbook data with fish ticket data; and 2) to develop an unbiased sampling theme of biological data collection from historical sardine logbook data. Marine research section scientists will work with Region 6 managers and biologists to develop specific solutions to known data quality problems in this fishery.

COMPETENCE GOAL:

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

Lead Entity Program moving to Recreation Conservation Office: The Legislature passed HB 2157, which moves the Lead Entity Program and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), effective July 1, 2009. The Department's Lead Entity Program has been coordinating the transition with RCO staff over the past month. At a recent Lead Entity Advisory Group (LEAG) meeting, the lead entities expressed concerns with the transition. The main challenges facing RCO included the need for lead entity advocacy and coordination with the Department, both locally (Watershed Stewards) and at the state level; the need for understanding and support from RCO for those functions that may be outside the scope of the RCO's traditional role (advocacy and promotion); and support for LEAG. To ease transition and help with lead entity contracting, the Department has been requested by RCO to provide support for the program until June 30.

Litigation between Puget Sound Harvesters Association and the Department: In 2007, and again in 2008, the Puget Sound gill-net sector, organized as the Puget Sound Harvesters Association, has litigated against the Department over fishing schedules, specifically fall chum fisheries in Puget Sound. The Department entered the North of Falcon (NOF) 2008 negotiations last year before there was a formal ruling on the 2007 lawsuit, but worked nonetheless to address some of the perceived shortcomings identified in the suit through extra negotiation sessions with a facilitator. The final ruling on the 2007 lawsuit regarding the fishing regulations came in June 2008. This first suit ended in a ruling against the Department's 2007 regulations, and we were required to pay a little over \$20,000 in legal fees for the Puget Sound Harvesters Association.

Following the NOF 2008 season, the Puget Sound Harvesters Association filed suit against the Department a second time for similar reasons, but because of the extra negotiation effort and subsequent tracking of decision points and outcomes implemented during the NOF 2008 process, the Department and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) believed we had a strong case for adopting the rules as agreed. The AGO requested that the judge issue an order for the second case prior to initiation of the NOF 2009 process to bring the case to a close. This put the Department in the best position to negotiate a season structure, and thus, not jeopardize or redirect the final outcome of the public season setting process with a legal decision.

Unfortunately, the judge did not make a formal ruling until April 29, 2009, almost two weeks following the end of the public process. Furthermore, this second ruling, issued on April 24, 2009, again sided with the plaintiffs and cited the Department for using opportunity (time), rather than catch, as the measure of allocation between gillnets and purse seines in the fishery. The decision on whether to appeal the ruling remains under consideration.

Deer Poaching: Officers filed charges in a deer poaching case. The subject was facing 12 charges for unlawful hunting of big game from a case in September and October 2008. The subject, at that time, had killed three deer. The subject went hunting again in February 2009 and killed two additional deer. After a month-long investigation, Officers filed 16 additional charges for unlawful hunting of big game for the February/ March case. The subject is out on a \$9,000

bond. His vehicle has been seized for forfeiture, along with his .22 caliber rim fire rifle and hunting knives. The unlawfully possessed deer meat was also seized and is being processed for DNA.

Cooperative Sampling Efforts on Spearfish Lake: On April 15, Region 5 staff collaborated with Mt. Hood Community College Fisheries Program students and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete a survey of warmwater species residing in Spearfish Lake in Klickitat County. Region 5 and Westside Warmwater Management staff sampled the lake with boat shocking, fyke, and gill nets set overnight. This survey provides the Department with good data regarding the species composition and abundance of warmwater species utilizing Spearfish Lake.

In addition to collecting data, this is also an excellent cooperative educational experience. Over 18 students participated in this year's survey. All the students that participated gained valuable experience in use of the fish sampling gear and data collection techniques. The Department implemented this cooperative program many years ago to develop a stable database regarding warmwater species usage of this lake and to assist in educating future employees. Over the years the Department has hired many students that participated in this program.

Officers Serve Search Warrant with Oregon: Enforcement Officers, along with four Oregon State Troopers and Sheriff's Deputies, served a search warrant on a subject's residence. Officers have been conducting an investigation on the subject and his wife after it was found that they have been purchasing resident hunting licenses in Washington and Oregon for years. During the investigation, it was found that the husband has two prior felony convictions for first degree burglary, and also was convicted for killing a grizzly bear in Montana. Upon execution of the warrant, the felon opened the gun safe for the Officers, thus showing he had access to the firearms in it. A bag of marijuana was also in plain view in the safe, as well as 98 pre-rolled joints. A large amount of drug paraphernalia and more marijuana was found in the bathroom, for a total of 548 grams of marijuana. A total of 12 firearms were seized, along with thousands of rounds of ammunition and numerous cans of gunpowder. Officers also seized a trophy 8x8 elk he took this year, a smaller elk rack, and a deer skull from 2006 that were taken illegally in Oregon with illegal resident licenses.

Axis Deer: Officers received a call from a man stating that approximately 25 Axis deer had escaped from their enclosure near Moses Lake. The man advised that he was caring for the deer while their owner was away in Africa. This is the first time Officers became aware that these deer were in the county. Officers worked with the landowner to ensure that all the deer were re-captured. Officers will be working on a plan for removal of these deleterious wildlife species.

Nesting Geese Disturbed: Basin officers responded to a report of a fire burning on one of the islands located on Moses Lake. This island is a major goose-nesting site. Responding firemen and deputies observed several men in a small vessel leaving the area. A deputy from Grant County was able to make contact with the men and found that they had accidentally let a small fire get away from them. Officers went out to the island and observed numerous smashed goose eggs lying about. The suspects apparently had been on the island collecting and destroying goose eggs found in various nests. The men will be charged with harassing wildlife and the fire.

Fatal Rock Climbing Incident: Officers assisted Klickitat County Sheriff's Office and Washington State Park rangers with a fatality rock climbing accident where two subjects fell while rope climbing at Horse Thief Lake State Park. One subject was pronounced dead at the scene. The second subject was flown out with critical injuries and later died. Enforcement Officers assisted by taking witness statements from other climbers at the scene and providing transportation to Parks personnel and the coroner.

Mishka Attends Hunter Education: Officers attended an annual hunter education training session in Ravensdale. Hunter Education instructors from King and Pierce counties attended the meeting. Officers presented the Karelian Bear Dog Program to the instructors.



SCIENCE GOAL:

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

Eighth Western States and Provinces Deer and Elk Workshop: Department staff coordinated and participated in the Eighth Western States and Provinces Deer and Elk Workshop, held this year in Spokane. The conference featured speakers from various state and provincial wildlife agencies, University researchers, tribal deer and elk specialists, conservation organizations, as well as students. Presentations were given on research topics such as: habitat based population modeling, elk responses to human activities including roads and hunting, predation, sex-age-kill population modeling, habitat improvement projects, sight-resight population modeling, sources of mortality in black-tailed and mule deer as well as elk, effectiveness of wildlife fencing and crossing structures on highways, hunter opinions, mule and black-tailed deer genetics, and the Hairloss Syndrome.

Pheasant Release Sites: Regional staff completed a report about possible pheasant release sites in Skagit and Snohomish Counties and submitted this to Headquarters staff for review. Staff will meet with a Fish and Wildlife Commissioner on the results of the search for a suitable site. Two sites are on U.S. Forest Service land. Staff have contacted the District Ranger regarding release activity.

EMPLOYEE GOAL:

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

Fish and Wildlife Officer Receives Bronze Star: Officer Jerry Zimmerman received the Bronze Star Medal at a ceremony at Fort Lewis on April 4. Detachment Two (Gray's Harbor) attended. The ceremony was held in front of the Marine Battalion stationed at Fort Lewis. Many of the Marines had just returned from active duty in Iraq. The Enforcement Program is immensely proud to have Officer Zimmerman in its ranks. He received the award, the third highest military honor, for courage and service during his second tour in Iraq.