

Director's report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
presented by Jeffrey Koenings, Ph.D., WDFW Director
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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.

GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Received: WDFW has received two grants totaling \$1.2 million from the USFWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. These grants will each fund a one-year long public outreach and scientific information gathering process as WDFW explores the feasibility of developing habitat conservation plans (HCPs) for two of its management responsibilities. Under consideration are two HCPs--one for the hydraulic project approval (HPA) program and the other affecting 830,000 acres of WDFW owned and managed Wildlife Areas. Development of either plan would entail a multi-year, public participation process. A cross-Program HCP Policy Steering Committee has been formed to provide broad policy guidance to these two efforts. Current steering committee discussion topics include the organizational structure and stakeholder involvement process for these two projects.

Citizen Science: Cutting-edge education activities in Washington State using citizen science recently received national exposure. A paper titled "Citizen Science: Stewardship Education in Washington" was presented at a special Stewardship Symposium that was part of the annual American Fisheries Society meeting. Prepared by Margaret Tudor and presented by Michael O'Malley, the paper highlights research findings that indicate students who gather actual data on natural resources perform better in WASL tests (in all areas), than students who do not. The Stewardship Symposium proceedings will be published separately in the near future.

Raptor Research: Jim Watson attended a meeting with Dr. Lisa Dabek, Director of Conservation at the Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ), and support staff to discuss current and future cooperative shrubsteppe raptor work. The WPZ is strongly supportive of continuing the work. Current changes in the conservation emphasis of the American Zoological Association (AZA) will allow the WPZ and 9 associated members in Oregon and Washington to change focus from international conservation projects to those in the Pacific Northwest. This will potentially provide significant increases in funding and opportunities through the zoo. In 2006, the WPZ plans to: continue to support the web cam (\$1200), fund current golden eagle blood contaminant work being conducted at the Washington State University lab (\$1400), and support a second ferruginous hawk cam (est. \$4,000).

Northern Leopard Frog Study: Leopard frog staff continues to monitor movement and survival rates of leopard frogs during fall migration. Twenty-one frogs have been telemetered this season. To date, 6 have been predated and 3 signals have been lost with cause unknown, while 12 frogs are still being tracked. Deep mud has prevented staff from pumping 3 ponds containing thousands of larvae that were colonized last summer by bullfrogs. Steve Germaine continues work on a leopard frog inventory report for 2002 - 2005 at Potholes Reservoir and Gloyd Seeps.

Project CAT: As part of a National Science Foundation grant, in partner with WSU, Gary Koehler, Hilary Cruickshank (Ph.D. candidate from WSU), WSU Field Technician Ben Maletzke, and 2 Cle Elum-Roslyn students captured and marked 3 5-week-old cougar kittens from a GPS collared female. This is the third litter we have documented from this female during the 4 years of monitoring her. To date, we have marked 6 kittens from 2 litters from females that have given birth since spring. We have 2 other females that may be birthing in the near future, judging from their ages and the length of time since their last litter. We are marking kittens with small VHF radio collars to document the fate of kittens on the Kittitas study area. Hilary is using this data to compare survival rates for kittens between the Kittitas and Northeast study areas to determine what influence different hunter-harvest regimes may have on kitten survival.

White-Winged and Surf Scoters: Biologist Tom Cyra began tracking our returning white-winged and surf scoters carrying VHF transmitters. Last winter WDFW PSAMP biologists deployed 26 satellite and 37 VHF transmitters, primarily in surf scoters, in an effort to determine winter roosting and feeding areas, spring staging areas, migration routes, and nesting areas. Sixteen surf scoter and 3 white-winged scoters equipped with satellite transmitters that were still operating made it to their nesting areas in the Great Slave Lake/Great Bear Lake area of the Northwest Territories of Canada. The majority of these birds are now back in Washington waters so we are beginning the search for returning VHF equipped birds, since these must be tracked from the ground, water, or air, unlike the remotely tracked satellite transmitters. Our partners in scoter research, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the USGS in San Francisco, also deployed VHF transmitters, and we continue to search for those birds as they make their way to the wintering grounds.

Elk Relocation / RMEF Project: District Wildlife Biologist Miller, Dan Howell of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Mark Smith, a local volunteer, met with the Toutle Lake High School class that will be conducting follow-up monitoring of elk on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. Radio collared elk were released upon the mudflow during the recent elk capture. These elk were either deemed too poor in condition to transplant or escaped the processing area after being marked with ear tags and radio collars. The students will check on the elk from high vantage points along SR 504 to determine if the radio transmitter is emitting a live or mortality signal. When a "mort" signal is detected, the local WDFW biologists will assist in locating the radio and elk and will perform a necropsy of the elk, if appropriate. The goal of the study is to monitor the fate of these animals in relation to the stress of capture. Students will develop a simple database to track their findings as well as prepare a summary report of the project.

Reports and Publications: The following WDFW authored, peer-reviewed article is now available as a reprint: Lance, M.M. and C. W. Thompson. 2005. Overlap in diets and foraging of Common Murres (*Uria aalge*) and Rhinoceros Auklets (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) after the breeding season. *The Auk* 122:887-901. Copies of the article will soon be made available on WDFW web-based Science Magazine.

Scott Pearson completed a streaked horned lark research progress report titled, "Streaked Horned Lark Reproductive and Population Monitoring, Habitat Manipulation Experiments, and Conspecific Attraction Experiment." This report is the first to enumerate the lark population on lower Columbia River islands. It documents lark reproductive success in the Puget lowlands, Washington coast, and lower Columbia River islands, and it describes the successful use of fire to improve lark habitat. Copies of the report will soon be made available on WDFW web based Science Magazine.

Western Gray Squirrel Project: Fall trapping on the Klickitat Wildlife Area has been completed with a total of 42 captures on the east and west grids. All animals were in good health with minimal indications of mange. A total of 12 juvenile squirrels were radio collared and will be tracked through the spring to examine dispersal movements and survival.

Leque Island Restoration: Wildlife area staff attended a meeting in Silvana, organized by Ducks Unlimited, to discuss the Leque Island Restoration Project. Some duck hunters are angry that Ducks Unlimited is helping on estuary restoration. There were 40+ duck hunters and private citizens there to voice their concerns about the project. Sean Edwards and Bill Blake of the Stillaguamish lead entity helped answer questions and explained the value of restoration to threatened Stillaguamish salmon populations. A biologist of the Stillaguamish tribe provided great scientific information based on their research. By the end of the meeting, the hunters appeared to be willing to listen to some of the data about salmon in the watershed. Several hunters volunteered to attend the citizen group that provides guidance to watershed activities. An "open house" is planned for December to provide more information to a larger public about the Stillaguamish Estuary and the restoration.

Threatened and Endangered Species Reports: The final Status Report for the Mazama Pocket Gopher, Streaked Horned Lark, and Taylor's Checkerspot was printed and distributed for a final 30-day public review. It is also available on the agency website. It contains recommendations to list the gopher as threatened, the lark as endangered, and the checkerspot as endangered. The recommendations will be presented to the Commission at the January meeting. Also completed was the final Status Report for the Aleutian Canada Goose. The report recommends de-listing the species, also known as the Aleutian cackling goose. The species has been de-listed under the ESA after eradication of foxes from their nesting islands resulted in dramatic recovery. Other reports at various stages of completion include recovery plans for the fisher, western gray squirrel, and sharp-tailed grouse, and status reports for the Washington ground squirrel and burrowing owl.

Freshwater Mussel Survey: Staff produced a 2-page flier entitled "Freshwater Mussels of the Similkameen River" and distributed it to applicants for Supplemental Approval to the Gold and Fish pamphlet for prospecting on the Similkameen River. The flier is also posted on the WDFW website. It

gives a synopsis of freshwater mussels in the Similkameen, why they are important, and how prospectors can help WDFW collect information about their occurrence in the river.

Bull Trout Spawner Surveys: Surveys being conducted by Mark Downen, Chad Jackson and other Region 4 staff indicate good numbers of bull trout in most systems from the Snohomish to the Canadian border. Water temperatures in bull trout spawning areas have been warmer than average, possibly delaying spawning. The number of spawners has tended to be lower than in recent years, however with the cold air masses that have moved over northwest Washington in recent days, spawning activity is expected to increase. Surveyors will be pushing hard to get surveys in before active redds get erased by the next heavy rain.

National Symposium: Dan Ayres and Alan Sarich attended the 3rd U.S. National HAB (Harmful Algal Bloom) Symposium in Monterey, California, October 3 through 7. There were many excellent opportunities for HAB researchers, fishery and human health managers to discuss issues of common interest. This research community is particularly attuned to the importance of conducting their work in a way that the final products will be useful for the fishery and health managers who are faced with the day-to-day struggles of trying to manage fishery activities while still protecting human health from the threat poised by HAB events. Alan co-authored a poster presented at the symposium that highlighted the ORHAB (Olympic Region Harmful Algal Bloom) project where WDFW plays a key role.

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Cattlemen's Association (WCA): WDFW staff attended the annual Cattlemen's Convention in Chelan last week and signed the MOU with them that includes plans for a pilot grazing program. Four areas have been identified as having the potential to benefit from some level of livestock grazing, and we are in the process of writing management objectives with the hope that some initial grazing can occur in 2006. The Cattle Producers of Washington have taken exception to the agreement, primarily on the grounds that it offers members of the WCA preferential treatment. We are in the process of trying to address their concerns.

Spotted Owl Management: Surveys and Forest Wildlife Section Leader Joe Buchanan participated in a one day meeting of the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team in Vancouver, British Columbia. Three areas of discussion were noteworthy: (1) Government representatives described a range of conservation options that they wish to evaluate. (2) The results of a Bayesian Belief Network model were presented. The BBN model was part of a comprehensive, spatially explicit population/timber supply modeling effort that was recently completed for the recovery team. (3) Government will soon release the draft recovery strategy for public review. The activities and products of the Canadian Spotted Owl Recovery Team are of great value and relevance to Washington, as we both are experiencing an accelerated loss of owls with related causal factors.

Wild Horse CRM Development: Edd Bracken and Ted Clausing represented the agency at a meeting/conference call to further discuss plans for the development of a Coordinated Resource

Management Plan for properties in the vicinity of the Wild Horse wind power development. All landowners (WDFW, DNR, Puget Sound Energy, and American Minerals) expressed support for the idea. NRCS staff will budget time to help with a survey of rangeland resources in the project area. No decision has been reached yet on whether it is feasible to have livestock grazing on part of the area in 2006.

WDFW / DNR Land Exchange: Mark Quinn met with Public Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland and Bonnie Bunning, Executive Director of Policy and Administration for DNR, to discuss the proposed exchange of lands between the two agencies. DNR has raised this project on their list of priorities and will fund their share of the exchange with existing funds next year, but fully supports WDFW's request for supplemental funds in the 2006 session. DNR recently completed two large land exchanges, the Ahtanum and the Blue Mountains, allowing them to focus more attention on the exchange with WDFW.

Shoalwater Bay Biocontrol Visit: Dave Heimer and Fritzi Grevstad (UW-ONRC) walked approximately 10-15 acres where biocontrol releases of *Prokelisia* (a leafhopper) were made over the last couple of years for *Spartina* control. The bugs are definitely present in numbers that warrant some further consideration of how we treat that area. About 75% of the stems either had bug damage or *Prokelisia* present. About 50% of the plants had at least 1-to-many active insects on them.

Whirling Disease: The causative agent for whirling disease, *Myxobolus cerebralis*, has been isolated from one adult fall chinook that returned to Priest Rapids Hatchery. Samples were submitted to the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) for testing. WADDL confirmed the presence of the pathogen in one of the twelve, five-fish pools that were submitted. The facility has been placed under quarantine and no carcasses have left the facility except those sold to American Canadian, Inc., the state contract carcass vendor. All nutrient enhancement activities have been suspended.

School Fire Timber Salvage: Kelly Craig, Shana Kozusko, and Doug Kuehn have been busy responding to ESA Section 7 questions regarding helicopter logging, thinning prescriptions, riparian management zones, access road construction, road use and maintenance, and management of steep slopes. They are in continued talks with the Federal Aid Office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate timely review of the proposed salvage logging operation. An oral auction for the sale of the salvage timber is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on November 14, 2005, at the Wooten Wildlife Area Headquarters.

WDFW Water Rights: Staff has compiled Department water rights into a database so that WDFW can manage these water rights and not lose them due to non-use. Staff concentrated on finding water rights that are legally in someone else's ownership but used by the Department (as contrasted to those legally belonging to the Department but shown in Ecology's database in someone else's name). It is just as important that these are inventoried and properly managed as those that we actually own. These are primarily at mitigation hatcheries and on leased lands associated with a Wildlife Management Area. Staff have a list of 305 of these for a total of more than 1500 water rights that the Department owns or manages. Staff also have a list of water rights by hatchery complex and individual facility and is working with complex and hatchery managers to assure completeness and accuracy and to determine actual use

as contrasted by permitted use. Staff drafted a rationale for funding the WDFW water rights position permanently.

Pacific Sardine: Intergovernmental Resource Management staff attended a meeting in early October of the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Management Team and CPS advisory sub panel. A primary focus of the meeting was an initial review of the Pacific sardine stock assessment that will be the basis for establishing the sardine harvest guideline for 2006. The assessment presented by Dr. Kevin Hill, of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), estimates a sardine spawning biomass of 1,106,391 metric tons which, when incorporated into the CPS Fishery Management Plan's sardine harvest control rule, produces a harvest guideline of 118,937 metric tons for 2006. This is 13% below this year's level. Formal adoption of the 2006 sardine harvest guideline by the Pacific Council will be addressed at its November meeting.

While fishery catch-at-age from the Pacific Northwest is included in the current assessment model, fishery independent indices of abundances still only include the area off southern California. The fishery off the Pacific Northwest has made up half of the coastwide-landing total in recent years. Both the CPS management team and advisory sub panel expressed concern that no information from the northern fishery, other than catches, are yet part of the coastwide assessment model. Midwater trawl and egg-collection surveys have been conducted off Washington and Oregon for the past two years. In addition, NMFS reported that plans for a synoptic sardine survey off the entire West Coast in April 2006, employing two of its large research vessels, are still on track. These efforts should help to fill the information gap that currently exists with respect to distribution and abundance of sardines off the Pacific Northwest.

Cedar Creek Dam Removal Completion: The end of October marked the end of the field season at the Cedar Creek Dam removal project near Lone in Pend Oreille County. Staff has worked closely with the Town of Lone in a 4-year effort to fund and complete removal of an unused diversion dam. On October 11 the 19-foot high, 95-foot wide Cedar Creek Dam was removed. Removal of this dam restored six miles of pristine habitat to full use by both westslope cutthroat and bull trout. On October 25 channel reconstruction was completed and the water bypass was removed restoring full access to Cedar Creek by fish for the first time in fifty years. Revegetation work will continue this fall and be completed next spring.

Naches Basin Salmon Carcass Nutrient Enhancement Project: Region 3 will not conduct the annual Naches Basin salmon carcass nutrient enhancement project this fall due to the detection of the causative agent for "whirling disease" in Priest Rapids Hatchery (PRH) fall chinook carcasses. Since 1999, R3 staff has received an average of 30,000 lbs. of frozen carcasses annually from PRH for placement in the upper Naches Basin. The carcasses are transported only after WDFW receives a negative report on the presence of the whirling disease parasite from the WA Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) located at Washington State University. Until this year the parasite had not been detected and the nutrient enhancement program had been allowed to proceed.

Aquatic Invasive Species: WDFW and WA Sea Grant organized a removal effort for an invasive tunicate, *Styela clava*, in Pleasant Harbor Marina on Hood Canal. Approximately 25 divers and 10 other volunteers participated. The tunicate was found to be very abundant and was also found attached to many boats. After an hour or two of combined diving effort about 1200 pounds of the tunicate were removed and buried upland. This did not noticeably affect the numbers present in this area. Birch Bay and Neah Bay are two other areas reportedly infested with this invasive species. This tunicate is having serious economic impact on the shellfish industry in other areas of the world and appears to be impacting native species. Follow up with the marina and boat owners will be made, as boats appear to be a high-risk vector for spreading this species of tunicate. The potential for further response efforts is being evaluated.

Green Crab Recruitment in Willapa Bay: Using pit and minnow traps researchers from OSU caught a total of 65 green crab in the Stackpole area of Willapa Bay during three days of trapping in late September. The crabs ranged in size from 37.8 to 52.1 mm carapace width indicating that these recruited to the estuary in late 2004 or early this year. The crab size and number caught are similar to the initial infestation that occurred in 1999. It is unknown if the origin of this cohort is from the local population in Willapa Bay or via transport from other estuaries to the south. Additional monitoring will occur this month.

Pacific Coast Groundfish: IRM staff attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting the first week of November in San Diego. At the meeting, the Council began the biennial management process for 2007 and 2008 by approving, for public review, a range of acceptable biological catches (ABCs) and optimum yields (OYs) for West Coast groundfish species. There were 23 groundfish stock assessments produced this year and most of them were accepted by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee as representing the "best available science" and, therefore, were suitable for use in management. Those assessments included overfished stocks and it was determined that lingcod, which was scheduled to rebuild (i.e., recovered to a level of at least 40% of virgin spawning biomass) by 2009, has been rebuilt ahead of schedule. There are still eight overfished rockfish species being managed under rebuilding plans; however, this round of assessments did not identify any additional overfished stocks. The OYs for a few of the overfished stocks are reduced from current levels, which means that fisheries will likely be further constrained in 2007 and 2008. Over the winter period, the states will hold public meetings to develop a range of management measures to achieve the range of OYs approved by the Council. These management measures will be presented to the Council in April 2006, with final approval scheduled for June 2006.

Foster Creek Wildlife Area: WDFW has completed the purchase of 2,288 acres near Bridgeport in Douglas County. This shrub steppe habitat, important for sharp-tailed grouse, will be an addition to the West Foster Creek Wildlife Area. The \$839,000 purchase price was funded by a grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program under the Critical Habitat category. Highly Migratory Species Drift Gillnet Fishery: At the Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in San Diego, the Council explored alternatives to allow a limited drift gillnet fishery off of California to target swordfish. Since 2001, the drift gillnet fishery has had a large closed area ranging from Monterey Bay north to

central Oregon for the protection of leatherback sea turtles. It is anticipated that a decline in effort in the drift gillnet fishery since then, coupled with new information on the status of leatherback turtles, may allow limited access to the closed area under an exempted fishing permit (EFP). The EFP would be conducted with 100% observer coverage and a limit on the number of turtle mortalities (determined by a Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service). The Council also considered another EFP to allow one vessel to convert from drift gillnet to pelagic longline gear to determine whether this gear conversion would be economically viable for others in the drift gillnet fleet. As pelagic longline gear has not been a legal gear in West Coast waters, there is very limited bycatch data for this gear. However, it is anticipated that the bycatch would be considerably less than for drift gillnet. The Council approved, for public review, a range of alternatives for the drift gillnet fishery, the drift gillnet EFP, and the pelagic longline EFP. Final action on these items is scheduled for the March 2006 Council meeting.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Restoration Settlement for Oil Spill into Columbia River: The states of Oregon and Washington, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have reached a restoration-based settlement with the Port of Portland for diesel spill into the Columbia River on May 2, 2003. Money from the \$154,000 settlement will go to restore nesting habitat for painted turtles, aquatic and riparian habitat restoration projects, and educational outreach on the impacts of toxins in the environment. Dan Doty of the spill team represented WDFW and the Washington State Resource Damage Assessment Committee in the settlement negotiations, and he worked with Fish and Wildlife Service Damage Assessment and Restoration staff in the Portland office to develop the restoration package.

Salmon Activity:

1) An Emphasis Patrol on the Tilton River in Morton was organized in response to multiple complaints of snagging and over limits. Officers worked undercover and observed numerous snagged fish, over limits, and not one single catch record card ever come out of a pocket. They even watched a father help his 7-year-old boy reel in a nice Coho that was unfortunately snagged in the side. The father and other adults cheered and congratulated the boy as dad dragged the fish on the bank, while the boy was stating "but its snagged daddy, but it's snagged". They should've listened to the boy. While making traffic stops, Officers noticed vehicles honking their horns and giving thumbs up for our efforts. At the end of the day, a total of thirty-eight arrests had been made. This effort was a great success to Fish and Wildlife as well as the towns people that wanted assistance in cleaning up the recreational fishery. 2) FWOs teamed up with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to arrest two gillnet fishermen who set netting for sturgeon in the middle of the Columbia River. The suspects had their net anchored on one end and were using a much heavier lead line than the law allows. The net and all sturgeon were seized. The USCG also terminated their voyage, as they did not have operational navigation lights.

Successful Lake Lenore Patrol: Fish and Wildlife Officers (FWO) conducted a 16-hour emphasis patrol at Lake Lenore to address complaints that some fishermen were making multiple trips per day exceeding the legal bag limit of one Lahaton cutthroat trout. Most of the fish are very large, and make them a tempting target. FWOs worked undercover from a boat documenting the people catching and retaining their one fish limit in the morning while other FWOs documented the vehicles they were driving. FWOs were able to identify numerous individuals who kept returning to fish after retaining their limit and taking their one fish limit away. At the end of the day, FWOs contacted the suspects and issued a total of nine citations for either exceeding the bag limit or attempting to exceed the limit.

Road Management and Abandonment Plan Completed: WDFW has now met its legal responsibility of having 100% of department forestland inventoried and RMAP's developed for each road management block (wildlife areas). Now, work will focus on the implementation piece and annual reports for each submitted plan.

Out-of-State Violator Cited: In response to a snagging report of closed water salmon activity near the mouth of Issaquah Creek, FWOs checked Lake Sammamish State Park and observed four individuals exit their vehicle and make their way down toward the mouth of the creek (fishing poles in hand). A short time later these same individuals were observed fishing the mouth of the creek. FWOs hid behind trees, shrubs, and garbage cans awaiting their return to their vehicles. Two of the subjects came out first and were contacted by FWOs and cited for fishing closed waters. Meanwhile, the remaining two poachers were observed hauling in a fish backwards and stuff it into his backpack. A short time later, these last two snaggers were also contacted as they neared their vehicle, one a Texas resident merely visiting and the other a repeat offender. The Texas resident almost choked when he was issued a \$2,000 citation for snagging, no license, and closed waters. However, he thought this was a pretty good deal given that his resident associate was going to spend a night in jail for an outstanding Driving While License Suspended (DWLS) warrant.

Shark Fining: In 2002 National Marine Fisheries Services through the Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted a rule banning the practice of shark fining in the Exclusive Economic Zone. As happens with many federal rule changes on fisheries, this rule was adopted by emergency order as a complimentary action for state waters, however, there was no follow up to bring a permanent rule action so the emergency rule lapsed. This came to our attention when a report of recreational shark fining occurred and upon examination of state laws no violation was found, although it could still be a federal violation. We are now moving forward to correct this oversight with a housekeeping measure to make this federal ban a violation in state waters for both recreational and commercial fisheries.

INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

Buckhorn Mountain Gold Wildlife Mitigation Plan Being Developed: David Mudd, former Major Projects Division Manager and recently retired from WDFW, has been rehired on a part-time basis to assist the agency under a cost-reimbursement contract with Crown Resources, Inc. David will be helping to coordinate the agency comments for the proposed Buckhorn Mountain gold mine in Okanogan County.

David brings over twenty-five years of major project experience to this important job. David attended a snowy tour of the mine site, along with agency hydrologists, the regional habitat biologist, the regional habitat program manager and the Major Projects Division Manager, Curt Leigh, where they toured potential mitigation sites and the proposed mining operation. The Draft Supplemental EIS was released last week and the agency will be providing comments within the next 45 days.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Fish Passage Inventory: Three field crews have been dedicated to the WSDOT road inventory, and this has enabled the TAPPS inventory section to make a substantial dent in the WSDOT culvert fish passage barrier inventory in WRIAs 1-23. In the past two months crews have completed inventories in WRIAs 4, 9, 11, and 13, leaving just three WRIAs to complete those identified in the Tribal Culvert Court Case area. In this period, crews inventoried 238 miles of state highway and identified and assessed 1,709 highway crossings for fish passage conditions.

Deer Hunting Violations:

1) A Sergeant observed two people walking across a field near Simms Corner (Douglas County) carrying their hunter orange vests in their hands rather than wearing them. The area is posted with numerous no trespassing signs. The man and his teenage son advised that they did not know who the property owner was. They also admitted that the boy had killed a deer way back behind a distant ridge and wanted to know if there were any roads in the area. He was advised that there were none. After collecting their information, they were released for the time being until the property owner could be located. About 20 minutes later, the Sergeant returned and found the suspect's vehicle missing. Driving down the county road the Sergeant found that part of the landowner's fence had been taken down and a fresh set of tire tracks going through the landowner's crop. The Sergeant followed the tracks for approximately 1.5 miles and found the suspects attempting to load the deer into their truck. At this time the property owner arrived and wanted them arrested after seeing what they had done to his property. 2) An organized night aircraft patrol at the close of shooting hours found two subjects spotlighting from a van on closed Weyerhaeuser lands. One subject was a convicted felon with a violent criminal history. Both were in possession of firearms. The investigation found stolen firearms and a butchered fawn in the vehicle. Four subjects were arrested for unlawful possession of firearms, stolen firearm, fail to submit, closed season and loaded rifle in a vehicle and criminal trespass. Several other subjects are involved and follow-up is being done. One subject was booked for multiple felonies.

3) Fish and Wildlife Officers (FWO) and a Forest Service (FS) officer conducted a decoy deer patrol near Forks. About twenty minutes after hunting hours, a vehicle coming by the unit stopped. A few moments later, the passenger in the truck shot at the decoy from inside the truck. Officers conducted a stop on the vehicle and arrested the two suspects. They secured the weapons and were in the process of moving the suspect vehicle onto a side road when another vehicle drove up to the vehicle. Undeterred by the other vehicle lights, the second vehicle's driver shot at the decoy deer twice. The first pair of shooters were quickly cited and released. After the second vehicle had been stopped and the suspects secured, they noticed a small amount of blood on the vehicle. A subsequent search of the vehicle yielded a deer heart and liver. The shooter, still possessing his un-notched deer tag, admitted to shooting a three-point

deer and leaving it in the brush, with plans of sneaking it out later. A driver's check revealed that this shooter had two misdemeanor arrest warrants. After sorting through all of the issues, the untagged deer was retrieved, and the suspect was taken to the jail in Forks and was cited for a multitude of big game violations.

Final Draft of the Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan: This is a unique and aggressive venture into sustainability of all aspects of the watershed, both ecological and commercial. The draft was approved and is being sent to the consulting editor for final polishing. Burkle has the draft for anyone who wants to look at it. This is truly a groundbreaking and holistic way of looking at a watershed and might well set a new standard in watershed planning.

Avista Spokane River Project Relicensing: In July, Avista submitted two 750-page license applications for their Spokane River and Post Falls Hydroelectric Developments. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is conducting an adequacy review of the applications and is accepting additional information requests from the agencies. WDFW submitted an information request for additional water temperature and flow data relationships for the Spokane River during summer months. In order to meet their minimum flow proposal for the Spokane River, additional water would be released from Lake Coeur d'Alene to the river. Because of the design at Post Falls, the additional water would be warm water from the surface of the reservoir. It is important to clearly understand the influence that additional warm water has on cold, groundwater inputs to the river and how this influences fish and aquatic habitat. Our request filed with FERC was met with letters of opposition filed from Avista, Idaho Fish & Game (ID F&G), Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality (ID DEQ), and the Idaho Attorney General's Office. WDFW will host a meeting led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with Regional Directors and staff from the EPA, ID F&G, ID DEQ, ID Attorneys, WDOE, WA attorneys, and WDFW in mid-November to further discuss minimum flow issues and the Clean Water Act 401 water quality certification process that has created much dissention between the two states.

Clark County Planning Commission Supports Agency Concerns: After receiving testimony from the acting Regional Habitat Program Manager Carl Dugger and a number of local citizens, the Clark County Planning Commission voted 6 - 0 to remand a proposed revision of the Critical Areas Ordinance back to county staff for a rewrite. The proposed revision would have removed habitat protection from 21,358 acres of fish and wildlife habitat by reducing buffers on Type 4 and 5 streams by up to 50%.

WSDOT Safety and Mobility Project Review: Crews wrapped up the biennial WSDOT safety and mobility inventory project. Every other year the TAPPS inventory section receives a list of proposed road projects from each of the WSDOT regions. Inventory crews are then dispatched to each region to conduct the road inventory to identify any possible fish passage issues that might fall within the proposed projects. Crossings that are identified as fish passage problems can then be addressed during the upcoming road project. This year crews inventoried 312 miles of highways within proposed safety and mobility projects, and they identified and assessed over 1,500 road crossings.

Potential Trouble for Lake Aberdeen Hatchery Water Supply: Larry Bledsoe, Water Manager for the City of Aberdeen, contacted WDFW early last week. Mr. Bledsoe informed us that the Weyerhaeuser announcement of their intent to close their pulp and large saw mills would reduce the need of commercial water by around 65%. All the commercial water is supplied from the intake on the Wynoochee River and feeds into Aberdeen Lake. There are two commercial lines; one feeds Weyerhaeuser in Cosmopolis and the other supplies water to the pulp mill in Hoquiam. The commercial supply lines are located just west of Lake Aberdeen Hatchery. The water that feeds the hatchery comes from those commercial lines. There is a crossover connection between the commercial supply lines so we can draw water from either one or both lines simultaneously. If the flow is reduced to Aberdeen Lake there will be additional fish health issues at Lake Aberdeen Hatchery. Mr. Bledsoe stated that there maybe a change in how water is supplied to the lake. It maybe on a schedule that would open for six hours and close for six hours, which would cause the lake level to fluctuate and because of the lower flows the water would undoubtedly be warmer. The warmer the water the more fish health issues we will see at Lake Aberdeen Hatchery. Depending on how warm the water gets it could potentially put us out of business at the Lake Aberdeen Hatchery.

State Commission on Hispanic Affairs Meeting: In August, Director Uriel Iniguez invited Alan Rammer to the September meeting of the State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, which meets bi-monthly in different regions of the state; eight commissioners and one member from the governor's office were in attendance. Alan discussed WDFW's outreach program and expressed a desire to connect our agency to the Hispanic community by exploring issues that are most important to them and how to promote conservation, stewardship and resource awareness. The Commissioners stated it was helpful that WDFW is proactively addressing their issues prior to having a need and Alan stated he was eager to help them with hunting and fishing issues in their jurisdictional regions. The Commission President, Yvonne Lopez Morton, Spokane, expressed pleasure that WDFW was represented at the meeting and will contact Alan as to how WDFW might begin working with the Hispanic community. Director Iniguez requested Alan's assistance regarding natural resource career opportunities in Grays Harbor. Alan provided outreach materials and agreed to assist in the development of ideas that will encourage youth interest in natural resources.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council: Director Koenings and Bill Tweit, IRM, represented Washington State at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meeting in Anchorage, October 5-11, 2005. Major issues, from the Department's perspective, included reconsideration of an IFQ program for the halibut charter fleet, development of a rationalization program for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island (BSAI) catcher/processor fleet that targets groundfish other than pollock, and revisiting the BSAI Pacific cod allocation between sectors. Some progress was made on rationalization of the BSAI catcher/processor fleet, which are largely Washington vessels. All members of the fleet now support this program and it is hoped that final action can occur in February 2006. Little action was taken on the Pacific cod allocation other than to keep it on schedule for a February decision. The halibut charter IFQ attracted a lot of attention as NOAA Director Hogarth had requested that the NPFMC assess its current support for the program before publication of the draft rules in the Federal Register. After considerable heated public testimony, the NPFMC voted to reply to Director Hogarth that NOAA should

proceed with publication of the draft rules and the NPFMC would not express any opinion on the merits of the program at present. This issue was decided at the NPFMC level in 2001; NOAA has taken almost four years to progress towards a draft rule. However, at the request of one NPFMC member from Alaska, the NPFMC will put reconsideration of the 2001 vote on the December 2005 agenda.

Ecosystem management also occupied the NPFMC. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center ecosystem management chapter, that accompanies the SAFE documents, is a considerable work in progress. They hope to have it available on their Internet web site in the near future. It will be a very useful reference on changes to the ecosystem of the BSAI. Discussion with the state of Alaska and other agencies on development of an ecosystem management plan for the Aleutian Islands continues to show progress as well.

MINIMIZE ADVERSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND WILDLIFE.

Tieton Dam Hydroelectric Project: Construction of the FERC-licensed Tieton Dam Hydroelectric Project has begun at the Bureau of Reclamation's storage dam on the Tieton River in Yakima County. Tieton Dam, also known as Rimrock Dam, forms Rimrock Reservoir along U.S. Hwy 12 near White Pass. Next week, the contractor will dewater the discharge pool/stilling basin at the base of the dam in order to begin powerhouse construction. WDFW, USFWS and others will participate in a fish recovery/salvage operation together with the project proponent environmental subcontractor. Region 3 bull trout radio-telemetry study staff will be on-hand to radio-tag any adult bull trout recovered in the operation.

Illegal (CWD) Importation of Big Game:

1) Officers worked an illegal importation (Chronic Wasting Disease) investigation that involved a suspect bringing an elk and a deer into Washington from Wyoming. Parts of the animals were distributed among the hunter, a local meat cutter, and a taxidermist. The case is still under investigation and charges are pending. 2) Officers contacted a subject that came into the Region Five office and admitted to bringing an intact deer head from Wyoming into Washington, including the brain. The subject had attempted to drop off the head at a local taxidermist, who refused to accept it. The subject willingly took the FWO to his residence where the head was seized. This was a trophy buck that the subject wanted to have mounted. Officers gave him the bad news that the entire mount needed to be properly disposed of and that the good news was that he was not going to be cited. After contacting the Cowlitz County landfill and being told that they will only take Cowlitz County items -No Exceptions-, Officers took the head to Tacoma for disposal.

GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES
PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL
OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND
HABITATS.

Watchable Wildlife: The third annual state Watchable Wildlife Conference was held in late September in Friday Harbor, with over 90 participants. Featured speakers were John Heron, creator of the Great Texas Birding Trails, and Judy Walden, a specialist in ecotourism that benefits the local economy, yet protects local natural and cultural resources. Preceding the conference was a social held at the Whale Museum. The conference was co-hosted by WDFW Watchable Wildlife staff and CTED's Tourism Office.

Wildlife-Themed License Plates: The random, free drawing to determine who gets the first 25 numbered license plates was conducted October 5, 2005. The first 25 people drawn for each of the 5 special wildlife background plates have been notified and will receive the authorization to purchase their plate on January 3, 2006. The winners of plate number 00001 were from Gig Harbor (Whale), Bothell (Deer), Bonney Lake (Elk) and Castle Rock (Bear and Eagle - two different people). The drawing was popular with over 1,083, 1,220, 1,355, 1,500, and 2,080 names in the drawings for the whale, bear, eagle, deer, and elk plates respectively. The new license plates will go on sale to the general public on January 3, 2006 at any Department of Licensing vendor.

Pronghorn Habitat Suitability Study: A pronghorn antelope habitat assessment is being conducted to support the evaluation and suitability analysis of potential reintroduction efforts in Eastern Washington. George Tsukamoto and Donny Martorello are working with the Wildlife Science GIS shop to develop a course-level habitat suitability index model. This work is being done under a small contract with the Seattle Sportsmen's Conservation Foundation.

Point No Point Fishing Access: Sue Patnude and Terry Legg met with Kitsap County Commissioner Chris Endresen, several Kitsap County Park officials, and representatives of the Hansville community. Discussion was focused on the WDFW Point No Point property and its future. It was agreed that a joint plan including both County and WDFW properties should be developed. This would meet WDFW's objective of providing public access to the fishery and the County's objectives of providing recreational opportunities to the public. IAC has provided funding for both entities, and officials from that agency will be brought into the planning process.

Coastal Commercial Crab Fishery Buoy Tag Program: The commercial customer service center successfully distributed all but 33,000 out of a grand total of 100,000 coastal crab fishery buoy tags to the commercial fishermen in less than two weeks. The Coastal Commercial Crab Fishery Buoy Tag Program was initiated after implementation of the legislation on July 24, 2005. The Program is the result of a collaborative process between WDFW and the industry and therefore, has been well received by the industry. The Coastal Buoy Tag Program is self-funded and reflects the Buoy Tag Program that was implemented in 2002 for the commercial crab fishery in the Puget Sound.

WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED

Quinault Tribe Discussions: WDFW staff met with the Quinault tribe again this week to exchange proposals relative to a pre-season management plan for the coastal crab fishery. There is the possibility

of a delayed start date in the area north of Grays Harbor due to the likely terms of tribal management agreements. Staff also met with the coastal crab advisory board this week to continue our discussions about how to structure the season opening if there is a differential opening date. A couple of options that have industry support have been penciled out, unfortunately industry seems to be equally divided in their support for the different options. Staff continues to work to secure vessels to conduct the test fishery. Hopefully the two boats that have shown interest will meet the contract terms and we will be able to get the first test fishery completed after the weather settles down next week. Coastal crab staff helped monitor the razor clam fishery and with razor clam study work.

Squaxin Clam Over-harvest in 2004 Resolved: Negotiations with the Squaxin Tribe for the 2006 Region 7 (Southern Puget Sound) Bivalve Plan have been completed. As part of the new Plan the Tribe agreed to "pay back" a significant clam over-harvest, which occurred in 2004 at North Bay public tidelands in Case Inlet. The Tribe over-harvested their share of Manila and native littleneck clams by 21,653 pounds and that overage will now be deducted from the Tribe's 2006 share. Ordinarily, such over-harvests are deducted automatically in accordance with annual bivalve Plans but in this case the Tribe voiced concerns about the reliability of their summer 2003 clam population survey. Those concerns were resolved this spring when we completed a cooperative survey of the North Bay clam resource with tribal biologists.

Response to Tribal Enforcement Call: Enforcement responded to a call for service from Squaxin Enforcement, regarding a non-tribal member fishing in a tribal season. Radio contact was made with FWOs to meet at the Harstiene Island Bridge with Squaxin Enforcement for a short boat ride to the location of the net and subject. The subject was booked into jail for felon in possession of a firearm warrant, and will be cited through investigation for fishing with a net, non-tribal in a tribal season. The net was pulled and about a dozen fish were removed.

Mass Marking and Selective Fishing - the Pacific Salmon Commission's Expert Panel Report: The Pacific Salmon Commission was briefed on findings and recommendations of a Coded-Wire Tag Expert Panel in Juneau, Alaska, on October 19. The draft report of the Expert Panel is not available at this time, but agencies, including WDFW, are expected to have the opportunity to critically review the report and provide comments that will be published along with the report by the end of the year. Because the report is likely to have a broad audience and will affect negotiations with the tribes regarding future mass marking and selective fishing, WDFW will need to prioritize staff time in November to ensure our critique of the report is thorough.

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Jameson Lake Fishery Recovers: Jameson Lake was hit by a fish-kill this past July/August. The causative agent was thought to be a toxic blue-green algae (*Microcystis* sp.). In response, Region 2 fish program staff conducted several surveys to determine the severity of the die-off in anticipation of the October 1

opener. Based on survey information the die-off was widespread, virtually eliminating all catchable trout.

Given the economic importance and historic popularity of the Jameson Lake trout openers, fish program staff took emergency action to recover the fishery. In the weeks preceding the October 1 opener, District Biologist Bob Jateff established that the toxic effects of the blue green algae had subsided and that the lake was safe once again to plant trout. Next, Region 2 requested assistance from other Regions and Olympia in obtaining a new source of catchables. The fish program came up with funding to plant around 17,000 trout, including over 1,600 large 1+ pounders. In addition, Region 1 donated close to 1,000 jumbo broodstock for the fishery. In total, enough fish were obtained to salvage the Jameson Lake October opener. In fact, local resorts were filled to capacity (250 people) with guests reporting good fishing --and the presence of many large trout.

The quality of the fishery was summarized in the October 6 edition of the Seattle Times:

"Jameson Lake in Douglas County reopened last weekend to some very good rainbow-trout fishing, with plenty in the 14- to 19-inch range." "It was excellent fishing, and pretty much everyone limited on nice carryover trout," said Ginger Merritt at Jack's Resort. "I know one lady who caught her five-fish limit in 45 minutes, and the total weight of all her fish was over 10 pounds."

The fish program response was outstanding (from Olympia to the Regions). Had the fishery failed, the economic and recreational implications would have been tremendous. On average each angler spends about \$135 per trip (e.g., gas, equipment, lodging, etc.), which translates to over \$33,000 from resort fishers alone (i.e., 250 x \$135). Jameson Lake resorts would have been hit very hard since the spring opener was a disaster. Overall, the outlook for the resorts and future recreational opportunities has improved markedly thanks to quick actions by fish program personnel.

Elk areas 3721 & 3722 Landowner Access Permits Update: Elk harvest on the Landowner Access Permits in the 3722 Blackrock Elk Area are as follows.

4 Feathers Fruit Co. reports they harvested 6 antlerless elk and 3 antlerless deer;

2 Bar A Ranch reported they added 2 antlered elk & 1 antlerless elk to their harvest list; and

Stimson-Lane Vineyards reports they were able to harvest one more antlerless elk.

This brings the total number of elk harvested since May 15 on Landowner Access permits for these areas to 53 harvested elk (26 antlered, 27 antlerless). The elk herds are staying in the ALE Reserve with only nighttime visits. Landowners are hoping that after the general seasons are over, there may be a better chance for harvest.

Columbia River Harvest Allocation Public Meeting: A public meeting was held the evening of October 20, 2005 in Cathlamet, WA. The meeting was the second of two to collect public comment on the management and harvest allocation for sturgeon and spring, summer and fall Chinook as well as wild winter steelhead impacts during the spring Chinook season in the lower Columbia River. The meeting was well attended with over 200 people present. There was similar representation by both Recreational and Commercial Fishers with 30 people providing comment.

Recreational Crab Fishery Reopens in Most of Puget Sound: State Puget Sound crab managers conferred with recreational crab advisers on how to stage recreational crab fisheries in six Puget Sound marine areas where harvest shares are available, according to recent estimates of recreational crab catch. The marine areas include 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12, which are all currently closed. The decision was made to reopen marine areas 9, 10, 11 and 12 on October 12, and marine areas 6 and 7 on November 16. All of these reopened areas will close at 6:00 p.m. on January 2, 2006. Marine area 12 will be open seven days a week while the other five areas will be open on Wednesdays through Saturdays and everyday from December 21 through January 2. An emergency regulation and news release was drafted and the information was provided for website and hotline messages. Once finalized, the information will be sent to all WDFW Enforcement, crab advisers, and Tribal crab managers. Staff also posted the 2005-06 commercial crab quotas and the first catch update of the season on the commercial crab web pages.

GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

Assist City Police Officers: A King County Sergeant responded to a call for service when Duvall Police Department (PD) stopped a subject on a traffic violation and discovered an untagged, ungutted 4-point black-tail deer in the bed of the truck. The driver and lone occupant of the truck was an 18-year-old Duvall resident who had his bow and arrows and a loaded 30-30 rifle in the front seat with him. He admitted to shooting the deer in the headlights of his truck from under a roadside apple tree with his bow and arrow because he had been watching it for the past two years and just couldn't help himself. This same subject was the driver of the truck who tried to outrun Duvall PD about a month ago when further investigation resulted in two untagged archery-taken deer at a residence. The illegal deer was donated to the Muckleshoot Tribe.

Successful Check Station at Tree Farm: A Fish and Wildlife Officer (FWO) planned and implemented an enforcement check station on the Weyco Vail Tree Farm. Detachment 4 (Cowlitz County) checked all vehicles coming out of the 150 mainline. They contacted approximately 130 hunters and checked 19 deer. No violations were discovered. The CB and portable radios were abuzz simply with the convoy of patrol vehicles entering the area in the afternoon. Word got out in a hurry but with this being the only egress point, they all had to come through the checkpoint. Over and over, hunters told FWOs how good it was to see such an enforcement presence in the area. The locals should be talking about it for years.

Rifle in Vehicle Discharges: A Fish and Wildlife Officer (FWO) and a Forest Service officer contacted a vehicle in the Little Naches. One of the subjects attempted to unload his (300 mag) rifle and it

discharged. The FWO was approaching the vehicle from the front, as the bullet shot through the passenger's side floor and exited out the fender. Pieces of the shrapnel hit the FWO on the leg (no injury). Both subjects admitted to smoking marijuana, and open alcohol containers and marijuana were located inside the vehicle.

Waterfowl Incidents: The snow goose problems started early this year as thousands of geese arrived early. Fish and Wildlife Officers (FWO), USFWS agents, and Skagit County Sheriff's deputies responded to a sliding glass door shot out accidentally by snow goose hunters lining Dike District 22 property at the edge of the Fir Island snow goose reserve. Several groups were identified and pellets were taken from hunters and from the glass door. Many other hunters fired at geese way out of range, causing cripples to land in the popular viewing reserve. Several hunters even parked in the reserve and left their vehicles there, taking guns and dogs into the reserve to get to open areas. FWOs met with a landowner who is thinking of posting his land next to the reserve. Several snow goose hunters were cited for other waterfowl violations.

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF WDFW'S OPERATIONAL AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Port Gamble Spill Review: Staff participated in the after-action debrief hosted by Department of Ecology and the Coast Guard. They met with Ecology and U.S. Coast Guard representatives to evaluate the response to the recent oil spill in Port Gamble. Emphasis was placed on exploring ways to improve state/federal response and coordination during incidents when the spiller is not a willing participant in the process. Challenges were also addressed for managing a spill when the key players are not together in a command post.

PROVIDE SOUND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF WDFW LANDS, FACILITIES AND ACCESS SITES

Oyster Reserve Sale: The 2005 oyster reserve sale has ended. A total of 91,438 bushels of oysters were sold to three companies, generating \$185,508 to the oyster reserve account. Of this amount, \$92,754 will go to the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team to fund low interest loans to repair failing septic tanks in shellfish growing areas in Pacific County. The sale went extremely well this year and encountered no problems. The creation of two subtidal dredge tracts was successful and will be repeated next year. With the loss of oyster production in Louisiana (the biggest producer of oysters in the nation) due to hurricane Katrina, the market for Pacific Oysters is improving. Next year's sale will likely attract more interest from local growers who will hope to increase their production to fill the void. If interest remains strong, staff will consider adding additional tracts to next year's sale to help fill the demand.

School Fire Elk Fence Reconstruction: Construction started on parts of the burned out fence, and construction continued on the Stevens Ridge part of the scheduled capital project called Bakers Pond/Stevens Ridge Elk Fence. The School Fire Elk Fence Reconstruction budget of \$350,000 is about 28% expended as of the end of September. This included materials ordered, but not yet received and paid.

Real Estate personnel pursued a land trade that will reroute a portion of the fence. The agreement will allow our crew to work on that land.

As of October 25, 2005, two miles of elk fence was constructed, and another 1.75 miles was half constructed (the posts are up). This was out of the total 14 miles of fence that was burned. There are a total of about 38 workers on the two construction projects. Weather is holding up, but is expected to worsen soon.

DEVELOP INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COORDINATE DATA SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION

New Web-based Public Opinion Survey: A new web-based survey designed to collect public opinions on a variety of statewide 2006-2008 hunting season issues will be released during the week of November 7. This survey will include issues ranging from turkey season dates to black bear, deer, and elk hunting issues. The opinions collected will help define the alternatives to be presented during a series of public meetings held throughout the state in January.

MAINTAIN A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Reckless Boater Identified: While watching fishermen at an overlook near the Barrier Dam on the Cowlitz River, a Fish and Wildlife Officer (FWO) witnessed a near collision of a jet boat and several fishermen. Apparently, the jet boat operator intentionally drove the vessel within feet of several people, swamping several of the fishermen. One subject literally dove into the water to avoid being hit by the boat.

The boat continued downriver at a high rate of speed clipping the lines of at least a half dozen fishermen. Our FWO was able to get a good description of the vessel and waited for the vessel to pass at every accessible boat launch downriver. He was only able to get 3 numbers from the vessel ID number and continued to follow the vessel downstream into Cowlitz County. Fortunately, the FWO located an empty boat trailer and vehicle near Castle Rock and proceeded to the launch. The boat he was following was on the trailer when he arrived at the launch. Upon contact, the intoxicated subject admitted to being the boat operator. A warrant check of the subject found a warrant from a citation that another FWO had issued to him, unfortunately the jail did not have room. The most astonishing thing about the incident was that no one fishing near the dam had even bothered to report the incident. Charges will be filed pending additional interviews.

RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE WITH HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

Ordinary High Water Line Training: Staff completed the final scheduled class in this training program with instructors from WDFW and WDOE. The last class through the Northwest Environmental Training Center in Seattle was well attended and quite informative for professionals in the public and private sectors. Several attendees noted the scientific elements of a three-parameter high water call (flow, soil,

and vegetation) are sound but will conflict with some current policies for delineation and land use regulations. Greg Hueckel recommended continuing the training while using discretion as to whether Hydraulic Project Approval or other approaches are the most sensible and promising for protecting fish habitat. He supported the concept of protecting seasonal channels and seasonally inundated areas that provide fish habitat at high flows. Staff emphasized that the training does not specify an OHWL, but the indicators must be documented so that they can be reviewed and decisions made based on the documentation.

RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Puyallup Fair: The numbers are in for the Puyallup Fair. The Northwest Outdoors "Go Play Outside" building had a steady stream of the more than 1.1 million people who attended the Fair. As always, the Department's exhibits and activities were enthusiastically received. Nearly 4,000 children, twelve years and younger, had the opportunity to catch and release a cooperative trout, supplied by the Puyallup Trout Hatchery, from the WDFW-sponsored Kids Fishing Pond. WDFW Enforcement Officers, who were invaluable sources of public information, manned the pond for the nine days of the fair. In addition to the many volunteers from the Department, their families and friends, sister agencies and partner user groups also sent help.