

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

October 6-7, 2006

“A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife”

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

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

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

Management Recommendations for Puget Sound Nearshore: The Habitat Program has restarted a multi-agency effort to develop a set of interim management recommendations for the Puget Sound nearshore. Local planners updating their critical areas ordinances and shoreline master programs will specifically gear the recommendations toward use. Funding for the project has been secured from PSAT and Ecology. Due to the relatively limited amount of funding, the guidance will focus on a small, but highly relevant, set of nearshore topics, including nearshore vegetation, over water structures, shoreline armoring, marine riparian/upland development, and forage fish. The interim guidance will pull together work already done or being done by the agency and other nearshore scientists, including Aquatic Habitat Guidelines white papers, HCP white papers, and additional sources of scientific work on the nearshore. A core advisory team made up of representatives from WDFW, CTED, Ecology, and PSAT is designing the guidance and will work with a consultant to write the document and conduct peer review. The project is anticipated to be complete by June 30, 2007. It is hoped that this interim guidance can be a stepping-stone to more comprehensive shoreline guidance from the agency when additional funding is secured.

Governor's Salmon Recovery Office 2006 State of Salmon In Watersheds Report: The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office requested assistance in compiling and analyzing fish barrier and repaired barrier data, and for creating maps for the biennial State of Salmon Report, which is due out this fall. The data will be used for one or more Statewide Indicators in the report, and it will also be used in several maps being created. In addition to the large-scale Salmon Recovery Region maps, six focus watersheds maps will graphically showcase statewide salmon recovery efforts.

Intensively Monitored Watersheds database: Staff researched alternatives for satellite and aerial photography to assess fish habitat conditions in Hood Canal Watersheds. Implementation of these remote-sensing technologies will improve our understanding of fish habitat production and restoration potential, and may improve costs associated with salmon recovery monitoring.

Marine / Tidal Energy Projects: Two more applications were submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for tidal energy projects. One is proposed for Willapa Bay and the other is a second proposal for Admiralty Inlet. This brings the number of marine/tidal energy proposals in Washington to 13. These projects consist of turbines driven by large propellers or windmill type blades. The blades can be over 60 feet in diameter, with tip speeds of 20 to 35 miles per hour.

Avista Spokane River Project Relicensing: In July, WDFW recommendations for terms and conditions for the new license were filed with FERC for four dams in Washington and the Post Falls Dam in Idaho. Under new relicensing rules, Avista has requested a trial-type hearing and has submitted alternative conditions to the Department of Interior (DOI) conditions for the Post Falls Dam. The new rules allow for the utility (and other parties) to request a trial to challenge factual statements made by the agencies upon which conditions are based. DOI will review and respond to the request, followed by a hearing conducted by an Administrative Law Judge. The outcome of the proceeding may ultimately alter operations of the Post Falls Dam and flows in the Spokane River.

Baker River Hydroelectric Project Fish Passage: Puget Sound Energy, in consultation with the Baker Fish Passage Technical Committee, has now developed plans to the 90% level for the new downstream fish passage facilities floating surface collector (FSC). Construction is expected to begin in November, and the new FSC should be operational in March 2008. The design includes a floating structure 130 feet by 60 feet with lead nets that go from shore to shore and from the surface to the bottom of the reservoir. A minimum of 500 cfs in attraction flows will provided by pumps in the FSC. This new trap is designed to trap a higher percentage and a wider size range of downstream migrants than the existing trap, which has been in place since 1960. This year's catch was the highest recorded, with 346,599 out-migrants, primarily coho and sockeye, trucked from Baker Lake to the Skagit River for release.

Ephemeral Data Collection Plans for Anacortes and Port Angeles: Spill Team staff met with petroleum industry representatives to begin development of environmental sampling plans to be used in the event of petroleum spills in the vicinities of Anacortes and Port Angeles. These plans help to maintain cooperative relationships between trustee agencies and the petroleum industry and reduce the planning effort required of damage assessment teams in the early stages of a spill response.

Funds for fish and wildlife Restoration Projects in the Lower Columbia River and Willapa Bay: Pre-proposals for the Columbia River Estuarine Coastal Fund (through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) are due on September 29, 2006. Over \$700,000 is available for habitat restoration and acquisition projects in the lower Columbia River and Willapa Bay. For more information call Dan Doty, 360-902-8120.

Family Forest Fish Passage Program: Twenty-one fish passage projects were constructed on family forest parcels that opened 81.56 miles of streams at a cost of \$1.4 million. Twenty more projects were delayed until next year. WDFW identified 21 additional high priority sites in this reporting period that will open 48 miles of streams when funded in the future.

Cushman Hydroelectric Project: U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit released its ruling on the appeal of the 1998 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) license for the Cushman Project. In summary, the Court found:

- That FERC correctly determined that this was a relicensing rather than an original license proceeding.
- FERC exceeded their authority in imposing time limits on other federal agencies. FERC had incorrectly rejected conditions submitted by the Department of Interior because they were late. The court stated that while taking 24 years to issue a license, FERC could not impose 60-day limit on other agencies.
- Even though only a small part of the project is on a federal reservation (e.g., Skokomish Tribe Reservation), the Department of Interior may address impacts that affect any of the purposes for which the reservation was created.
- FERC improperly rejected Interior's conditions to protect the Reservation and must revise the license to include all of those conditions.
- The Clean Water Act requires Ecology to issue a public notice as part of the water quality certification process, but if this requirement were not complied with, they would not vacate the license.
- FERC correctly decided not to require a supplemental certificate of compliance with the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).
- FERC may issue a license that is uneconomical.
- The existing Biological Opinions are sufficient for this proceeding.
- Tacoma must resume preparations to release a minimum instream flow (240 cfs) into the North Fork of the Skokomish River.

The license will now go back to FERC for revision. It appears that this decision will have a positive influence on the conditions that are included in other hydropower licenses issued by the FERC.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB): The SRFB made a policy change regarding salmon recovery Projects of Concern (POCs). If POCs are kept on a list by a lead entity/region past the October 27 Review Panel's final decisions and submitted to the SRFB for their December funding meeting, regions and/or lead entities run the risk of losing part of their proposed funding allocation. The basic intent of this SRFB policy change is to provide an incentive for lead entities and/or region's to remove final POCs from the project list before it reaches the SRFB in December. However, they wanted to allow lead entities and/or regions an option to access their full allocation if they made that decision.

The SRFB awarded WDFW Region 1 funding for the Northeast Region to hire a facilitator to explore whether the lead entity could be expanded to include other WRIAs in the bull trout recovery region. The Coastal Lead Entities (Grays Harbor, Pacific, Quinault, and WRIA 20) were also awarded funding from the SRFB to explore how they could better coordinate their efforts toward a more regional organization.

Governor's Land Use Agenda: The agency is actively participating in the development of the Governor's land use agenda. A core team of representatives from WDFW and the Departments of Agriculture; Ecology; Community, Trade, and Economic Development; and the Office of Financial Management will meet regularly throughout the legislative session to work on land use issues of concern to the Governor. Topics under consideration of particular interest to WDFW include how the best available science rule is implemented and how pre-existing uses (including existing and ongoing agriculture) are treated under the Growth Management Act. These topics could become proposed legislation during the next session.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (RFEG): Staff attended the RFEG Advisory Board meeting in Lacey. Staff also provided comments to Dianne Ludwig on the NOAA RFEG Grant Proposal draft. Under this grant proposal, each of the RFEGs would be awarded \$25,000 each year for three years for one enhancement project per year. Watershed stewards would be reimbursed for their time to provide technical support and approve the project selection.

Comprehensive Plan Update Public Hearings: Kittitas County is updating their comprehensive plan and reviewing annual amendment requests to the comprehensive plan. There have been numerous requests to amend current land use designations on over 8000 acres of resource lands that would permit piecemeal development. We are particularly concerned where large contiguous blocks of commercial forests (including critical fish and wildlife habitat) are re-designated to allow smaller parcel sizes. Proposals that will result in habitat fragmentation are very likely to have significant, unintended, negative consequences on fish, wildlife, and recreational opportunities that contribute to the quality of life and the economy of Kittitas County. Of particular concern was a request by American Forest Resources to re-designate about 7000 acres of lands from commercial forest of long term commercial to Forest and Range, allowing lot sizes down to 3 acres. We are attempting to seek creative solutions with AFR to fund acquisition of most of the critical habitats while developing a holistic, strategic approach in concert with the Kittitas County for a planned development that is consistent with habitat protection, salmon recovery and preservation of open space, forestry, grazing and recreation. We requested that the Planning Commission not take action to re-designate commercial forest lands without consideration of a watershed scale context. Staff continues to provide comment on proposed changes to the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.

Kittitas County Land Conversions: Staff continues working with county planning staff on MDNS language for Forest Practice Conversions to encourage retention of forest canopy and function on residential developments and using "clustering" to the extent possible. Conversions to residential housing are rapidly spreading into former forest and rangelands in upper Kittitas County. The County has required our recommendations in a recent development proposal near Easton that was appealed to the commissioners by third parties. The county's mitigation requirements were upheld.

Hopkins Ridge Mitigation Agreement: Staff completed negotiations on the Hopkins Ridge Windpower Site with Puget Sound Energy. It is now under AG review. This represents a nearly 4-year effort on the part of the Department. Mitigation was obtained in accordance with our state policy for the lands affected by the construction and the footprint of the project itself. In addition, the location of the site in a very sensitive elk range necessitated the negotiations of some difficult and unique agreements. Hopkins Ridge is stands between the Tucannon Valley and the city of Dayton in Columbia County. This are is very popular with elk hunters and also is the site of significant crop damage claims by local farmers. The Department was very concerned that a) hunting may not be allowed in the area and b) this may become a refuge for calving, both of which would increase crop damage in the area. Staff successfully negotiated for PSE to help provide a herder in the first year of operation and that the entirety of the project be open to hunting. A committee of technical personnel and citizens will also be formed to review operations periodically for excessive mortality and/or other wildlife-related problems. This is an excellent agreement that addresses the needs of wildlife and local citizens, and yet allows a major power project to go forward.

Umtanum Creek Fish Passage Project on the LT Murray Wildlife Area: Umtanum Creek is a small tributary to the Yakima River that drains a relatively low elevation watershed between Wenas and Manastash basins. It is one of the few tributary streams (only one with much ecological function left) that enter the Yakima River Canyon and supports steelhead, rainbow trout and bridge-lip suckers. The perennial reaches of the stream are primarily within WDFW and BLM lands, with the headwaters in a mix of private and public ownerships. In the early 1960s, Williams Northwest Pipeline Company put a high-pressure gas main crossing under Umtanum Creek, approximately 1000 meters downstream from the Durr Road ford crossing. This pipeline was exposed by flooding presumably in the 60s prior to WDFW's acquisition of the land, as WDFW has no record of this work. A large complex of gabions was installed on the shoreline and across the creek channel to protect the pipeline sometime in the past 40 years. This created a complete barrier to fish passage. Subsequent floods in the 1990s resulted in channel degradation below the gabions and deformation of the gabions.

As part of the State wildlife area fish passage inventory work, Alex Uber contacted Williams Pipeline about two years ago and alerted them to our concerns and the need to develop a plan to correct the passage problem and a develop a schedule of work. Williams retained GeoEngineers, Inc. to analyze and develop a remediation plan. Although conceptually the resulting fish passage project is fairly straightforward, there are multiple complications including wetlands, archeological resources, rights-of-way and issues of jurisdiction. Construction of a roughened channel fishway is now well underway and should be completed within two weeks. This project involved collaboration of various WDFW programs and personnel including: Alex Uber, David King, Gina McCoy, Brent Renfrow, Cindi Confer, Wayne Hunt, and Brian Trickle.

Naches Ranger District Grazing Allotments: Staff provided recommendations to the Naches Ranger District's proposed grazing allotments. There are significant concerns with protection for newly discovered Mardon skipper butterflies, protection bull trout spawning areas, and grazing domestic sheep within close proximity to the Tieton River bighorn sheep herd.

A Mardon skipper colony, the first documented on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, was recently discovered within the Pinegrass Grazing Unit. This population was discovered late in the flight period and the extent of their habitat and critical use areas are not well known. It is likely that other Mardon skipper colonies exist and we have recommended that the USDA Forest Service conduct additional surveys for this butterfly begin in June 2007. We offer our agency's expertise and assistance in Mardon skipper survey design and implementation. Mardon skippers are a state endangered and federal candidate species. RCW 77.15.120 prohibits the take of any state endangered species. Grazing is noted to be detrimental to both Mardon skippers and their habitat. We have recommended a conservative approach for renewing the grazing leases that includes annual leases and surveys, or an adaptive management approach that provides for adjustments as new information becomes available.

In 1998, the USDA Forest Service and WDFW initiated a collaborative project to re-establish California bighorn sheep to their native range within the Tieton River Basin. The project has been a great success with a growing herd of over 100 sheep that now provides abundant wildlife viewing opportunities and sheep hunting. WDFW has opposed the proposed conversion of the Soup Creek grazing allotment from cattle to domestic sheep, as it would jeopardize the existence this newly established bighorn sheep herd. Incidental contact between domestic and bighorn sheep must be avoided as fatal respiratory diseases, usually caused by *Pasteurella* or *Manheimia* spp., can be easily transmitted from domestic to bighorn sheep. Whenever bighorn sheep and domestic sheep have opportunity to co-mingle, bighorns invariably contract a fatal disease and the entire herd is quickly decimated. Diseases can then spread further to other adjacent bighorn sheep herds. Radio telemetry data from Tieton bighorn sheep indicate they frequent the eastern edge of the Hause Creek grazing allotment. As the Tieton bighorn herd grows, we expect that the bighorn sheep use area will expand west. Individual wild sheep are likely already using the area in which the Naches District is proposing to issue sheep grazing allotments. We remain concerned that our concerns may not be addressed in the new allotments.

Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Unit – Fish Passage Project: A longstanding fish passage barrier was replaced with a "fish friendly culvert" on the Scatter Creek Wildlife Unit. CP&E Division staff designed and constructed the project in coordination with TAPPS personnel as part of the Wildlife Area Fish Passage and Screening Correction Program. The fish passage barrier correction also represents progress towards correction of fish passage barriers within the Tribal Culvert Case area. The work will provide juvenile coho access to over 1,500 square meters of rearing habitat.

Divide Ridge Timber Sale: The Divide Ridge area is at high elevation with a mosaic of meadows and forest (approx 5,500-6,300 feet) along Divide Ridge. It contains mature and old growth sub alpine fir forests, mountain big sage meadows, and wet meadows. This area provides valuable habitat for forest species such as marten, wolverine, migratory songbirds, and potentially lynx. The roadless character of the area provides unique outdoor recreational hunting opportunities. This area is also identified in the DNR's HCP for spotted owls as having a role in spotted owl habitat conservation across the landscape. Staff suggested that there would be extensive impacts to the area from not only the proposed timber harvest, but also from the associated increase in human use from easier access by the new access roads. Due to our concerns with possible designation of this area as a Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA), concerns with compliance with DNR's Spotted Owl HCP, impacts associated with road construction, and development of the Ahtanum Forest Plan, the DNR has agreed to table the plan to proceed with the proposed timber harvest.

Shale Creek – Abandoned In-Stream Fish Collection Facility Removed: A project to remove an abandoned in-stream fish collection facility on Shale Creek, tributary to Clearwater River, was recently completed by members of the Capital Projects & Engineering Division construction crew and TAPPS staff. Our salmon culture construction crew originally built this facility in 1987 in cooperation with the Quinault Tribe to provide a site for collecting coho broodstock to be used as seed for their planned full-scale hatchery. Once the hatchery at Salmon River on the Queets was built, the Shale Creek site was abandoned. Woody debris began to collect on the instream structure and became a fish passage problem. Eventually erosion lowered the streambed level downstream and created a significant fish passage problem. With staff from TAPPS taking the lead, a grant proposal was submitted to and approved by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to remove this facility and restore the stream to its natural condition. WDFW, the Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition, and the Quinault Tribe provided matching funds. The two-phase removal project began in 2005 and was completed this year. This is a good example of a successful cooperative project, and is another fish passage correction within the Tribal Culvert Court Case area.



Shale Creek – Collection Facility Before



Shale Creek – Collection Facility After

Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA) Fish Passage and Screening Inventory Update: Fieldwork for the FRIMA inventory on Colockum, Squilchuck, and Stemilt creeks has been completed. Field data will be entered to a digital format and the findings will be summarized in a written report. This report will provide information on all fish passage barriers and insufficiently screened pumps and surface water diversions encountered during the inventory. These three watersheds are quite extensive and crews did a great job finishing the fieldwork in a relatively short time period.

NE Regionalization: Staff presented a Northeast Regionalization Scope of Work and proposal to the SRFB on September 12. The SRFB voted to approve a \$79,000 contract to WDFW to fund this effort. This proposal will fund a collaborative process to bring together the major stakeholders in Northeast Washington to discuss the formation of a Regional Organization to confront fish management issues. WDFW will contract out the lead for this process to Alison Squires who successfully led the Subbasin Planning effort in this area. As part of the proposal WDFW will engage USFWS in discussion regarding the DRAFT Bull Trout Recovery Plan completion and implementation and how this may relate to any organization that is formed.

WRIA 59 Instream Flow Work: Staff completed the field season assisting the planning unit in conducting instream flow analysis work. In this unique and innovative approach to instream flow setting, citizen members of the Planning Unit go out with the consultant, members of the Kalispel Tribe and WDFW employees to conduct instream flow analysis together. This fieldwork will also be conducted in 2007. Information gathered will be used to help set minimum instream flows in rule.

Proposed New Wind Farm Project: Region 2 Habitat and Wildlife programs are beginning to deal with a proposed new wind farm project proposal by the Douglas County Public Utility District within the Withrow area of Douglas County. Concerns include potential impacts to sage grouse, raptors, and other avian species in the area, as well as impacts to native sagebrush habitat. Initial plant and avian baseline studies have been conducted within the proposed project area, and an Environmental Impact Statement for the project is expected within the year. WDFW has offered to supplement this data with our own survey work to better understand the potential environmental impacts that will need to be mitigated.

Sustainability – Biodiesel and Other "Green" Shop Products: Biodiesel is being used in all diesel equipment at the Lacey and Tumwater construction shops. The first bulk delivery order was placed under the new state contract in July. Currently, a B5 blend (95% diesel, 5% biodiesel) is being purchased, but no difference has been seen in performance. Staff is anticipating increasing the amount to B10 in the near future. Also, the construction shops have recently switched to a biodegradable hydraulic oil for use in backhoes and excavators (important when working in streams), and has purchased a parts cleaner that not only saves staff time, but only uses water and biodegradable soap; no more solvents.

New Lights Saving Energy and Money at Mill Creek Office: New lighting has been installed at the Mill Creek Regional Office. The new lights will save 12,000 kWh/ and over \$900 per year. Snohomish PUD has been a strong partner with a 50% matching grant for materials and labor.

Hydrosystem: The extremely warm weather in the Northwest resulted in the need for several emergency meetings to discuss operation of the Hydrosystem. There was concern in mid-July for a potential power emergency (that did not materialize). Several meetings were held to discuss the operation of Dworshak Reservoir in the Snake River basin. Water temperature at Lower Granite Dam was hovering just below the water quality standard of 68 degrees for several weeks. During the last week of July, the standard was exceeded; however, the availability of additional cool water from Dworshak to help cool down the river is dwindling. The salmon managers (state, tribal, and federal) will be tasked with making some hard decisions on when to use the water and which fish stocks to support the most. This will continue to be a topic of discussion in the upcoming weeks.

Snowy Plover: This season WDFW worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), State Parks, and volunteers to count the number of breeding adult plovers at Leadbetter Point, Midway/Grayland Beach, and Damon Point. We also located and monitored plover nests to determine hatching success, and we monitored chicks post-hatching to determine fledging success. The season is now complete and we are in the process of analyzing and summarizing data. A full research progress report will be available in late October or early November. Some of the season's highlights include: the discovery of a new breeding site in Pacific County; testing new methods for estimating the number of breeding adult plovers; successfully using volunteers to help monitor previously occupied, but currently unoccupied breeding sites in Grays Harbor County; and working with State Parks to resolve potential conflicts between human activities and plover breeding at both Damon Point and Midway/Grayland Beach. In addition, WDFW is assisted USFWS with the release of captive raised plover chicks. These chicks were hatched and hand reared by the Oregon Coast Aquarium from eggs that were covered by drifting sand and abandoned by the adult birds. One bird was released at Leadbetter Point and has been sited since (it has a unique color band combination on its legs), and two additional birds were released in the week of September 11, 2006.

Healthy Lands Initiative: Edd Bracken met with staff from Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nature Conservancy, and Okanogan Conservation District regarding the Healthy Lands Initiative (HLI). HLI is a pilot project funded by the Washington Biodiversity Council with the goal of building a collective understanding of biodiversity resources in north-central Washington. HLI is working with groups in the Methow Valley and Moses Coulee areas to try to determine if a grass bank (or perhaps some other model) can be used as an incentive program to benefit riparian and shrub steppe ecosystems. The Methow Valley group has identified WDFW lands as a key part of this strategy largely due to their location between the developed properties at lower elevations and traditional grazing lands (owned by Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service) at higher elevations. HLI staff members are working to prepare maps of the area showing various land ownerships and current livestock grazing permits and/or leases.

Mountain Goat Research: Cliff Rice attended the 4th World Congress on Mountain Ungulates and presented two papers: *Mountain Goat Research in Washington* and *Rutting Dynamics of Nilgiri tahr* (funding provided outside the agency). Cliff also consulted with other scientists on mountain goat genetic analysis and population modeling. In addition, Cliff was the recipient of an award recognizing his contribution to Nilgiri tahr conservation in Eravikulam National Park (Kerala, India), based on work he conducted there in 1979-1981, and was interviewed by the Indian Express newspaper and BBC.

Sage Grouse: Will Moore, Jeff Bernatowicz, Mike Schroeder, and Mike Livingston teamed up with personnel from the U.S. Army and the Yakama Nation to capture 24 sage grouse from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge for release on the Yakima Training Center (15 sage-grouse) and Yakama Reservation (9 sage-grouse). We combined our efforts with biologists from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the USFWS and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Disease Lab in Madison, Wisconsin, who were collecting blood samples from sage grouse for disease testing, including West Nile Virus. All 24 birds were captured, processed, and safely translocated to Washington in less than 20 hours.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP): WDFW's Landowner Incentives Program received the maximum funding awarded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a highly competitive national process for 2006. LIP's Science Review Panel has selected a slate of habitat restoration and preservation projects on private lands totaling \$766,000. Projects are now subject to a federal compliance review and will likely be implemented next summer. LIP also received \$180,000 in administrative funding of \$19 million available nationwide. Congratulations to everyone who helped prepare the grant.

Eastside Summer Fires: Region One Sergeants coordinated officer participation with roadblocks and property protection on the Columbia Complex Fire out of Dayton. Eleven WDFW officers were mobilized through the State Fire Marshall and the Columbia County Sheriff and worked roadblocks with two-man shifts 24/7 beginning on August 22, 2006. During the roadblocks citizens were watching and becoming hostile and yelling at the Officers and Deputies for disallowing them entry and nearly started a riot. Wildfire transitioned from private and state lands within Columbia County to the National Forest and the Wenaha Wilderness. As of Labor Day, the fire burned through 87,000 acres. Through the course of our staffing of the roadblocks, we contacted many of our large landowners and public officials within Columbia County. WDFW's Enforcement Captain worked with WDFW Public Information Officers to provide website updates to hunters concerning access within the affected areas.

Record of New Fish Species in Ross Lake: Region 4 staff recently discovered reddsides in Ross Lake. Prior to this year, there appeared to be no evidence of these fish, native to British Columbia and Washington, but not to the upper Skagit basin, being reported in the lake. The potential for competition and unpredictable effects as a possible forage base for native rainbow trout and ESA listed bull trout is of great concern.

Removal of Derelict Fishing Gear: The WDFW, in conjunction with NOAA and the Northwest Straits Commission, is engaged in a program to locate and remove derelict fishing gear, primarily lost crab pots and gillnets. For the 12-month period ending on August 31, we had the following results:

Crab Pots – An area at the north end of Camano Island was surveyed with advanced sonar to identify potentially lost fishing gear. A total of 2.3 km² were surveyed and 83 potential lost pots were identified - 36 per square kilometer. Divers later attempted to remove the pots and located 54 of them, plus an additional six pots, which had not been detected by sonar. A total of 60 pots were removed: 22% were still actively fishing. The pots contained 41 Dungeness crab, eight rock crab and one fish. Of the pots recovered, 28% were not equipped with legal rot cord, 53% had legal rot cord and the status could not be determined for 18% of the pots.

Gillnets – A total of 15 derelict gillnets were removed with a total surface area of over 270,000 sq. feet (6.25 acres). Eleven of the nets were still actively catching fish and other animals. A total of 730 animals were observed entangled in the nets during removal operations. The great majority of these animals were dead. Ownership could not be determined for any of the nets.

Derelict Gillnet Removed: On August 11, the Wildlife Program observed a derelict gillnet located on the west side on San Juan Island. From the air, several dead marine mammals were observed in the net. The department started work to remove the net but the removal was not scheduled until August 24. On August 15, divers were surveying the site in preparation for the removal and thought they saw a dead killer whale trapped in the net. The department (including the Enforcement Program), Corps of Engineers, NOAA and the NW Straits Commission immediately increased the urgency of removing the net as soon as possible. On August 17 the net was removed with the assistance of the Corp's salvage vessel *Puget*. There was no killer whale in the net- what appeared to be a dead whale wrapped in the net was actually a dark rock partially covered with white anemones. However, the net did contain over 100 dead salmon, "lots and lots" of dead crab and one freshly killed harbor seal. The dead seals observed earlier had either dropped out of the net or been consumed. The *Puget* took the net to Seattle for disposal. This is an excellent example of interagency cooperation to solve a resource problem in short order.

Oyster Enhancement: Sixty bags of hatchery-reared Pacific oyster seed set on shell were placed at West Penn Cove. These seed oysters will grow to legal size in about three years and provide increased recreational opportunity at this popular Whidbey Island public beach.

Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen: The low dissolved oxygen event resulting in the fish kill of early last week has only improved slightly following a weak weather front with northerly winds and rain mid-week. The surviving fish and shellfish in the southern portion of the Canal still remain crowded near shore in shallow water but were noticeable less stressed than the observations following the day of the kill. The post weather front turned sunny again which could spur additional algal blooms but another weak weather front is forecast for the coming weekend. Barring southerly winds, additional relief may result in upper water level improvements.

Freshwater Jellyfish: Region 2 staff collected what appears to be a freshwater jellyfish from Rock Island Ponds near Wenatchee. We will be sending a sample to a jellyfish expert for positive ID, but it appears that the jellyfish is a non-indigenous species (*Craspedacusta sowerbyii*) that has been documented in several other Washington locations.

H Integration: The Department is working with individual co-managers to advance H-Integration in Puget Sound watersheds. H-integration can be defined as a coordinated combination of actions among all the H-sectors - harvest, hatchery, habitat and hydro - that together work to achieve the goal of recovering self-sustaining, harvestable salmon runs.

The Department is focusing on the Puget Sound watersheds with Chinook spawning populations. The goal is to have most of these ten watersheds complete an H-Integration process by May 2007, with the remainder completed by August 2007. (Watersheds without independent Chinook spawning populations (e.g. San Juan, Island) will be included in a focused effort to advance the nearshore salmon recovery 3-yr work schedule.)

Six of the ten-targeted watersheds are already moving forward with co-managers currently developing a draft outline. Draft timetables for completion of an H-Integration process in each of the watersheds will be developed with each watershed and are expected to be in place by November.

Salmon and Steelhead for the 21st Century: Salmon and Steelhead for the 21st Century is a four year initiative of the Department designed to conserve wild salmon and support sustainable fisheries by:

- Integrating decisions about hatcheries, harvest, and habitat at multiple scales; and instituting a new framework for science-based, transparent, accountable management.
- A multi-part strategy for success, which includes a long-term plan for institutionalizing a new framework for decision-making.

Several key tasks are underway:

- Identifying and back planning the specific results that WDFW will expect with the completion of the initiative, including near-term results for 2007-2009 and long-term results for salmon and steelhead.
- Establishing near-term annual work plans to meet immediate Department obligations in Puget Sound and the Columbia River.
- Working to make WDFW's external communications with stakeholders and the public as effective as possible.

Assistance with strategic planning, project facilitation, coordination, and communication from private nonprofit Long Live the Kings (LLTK). LLTK's work on the initiative is funded by a federal appropriation, a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and independent contributions.

Invasive Species: The agency was notified in late May that a graduate student working had captured 23 Asian gobies (*Rhinogobius brunneus*) in April at the Ducks Unlimited wetland restoration project near La Center. In May a single goby was captured during a USGS survey 60 miles downstream near Crims Island. Researchers are awaiting results of genetic testing to determine whether the captured fish are the landlocked or the amphidromous form, which would be more problematic. On August 22, ANS Program staff seined the wetland and the canal linking the wetland to the East Fork of the Lewis River. No Asian gobies were detected in this latest survey. As in previous surveys, several species were captured, including: common carp, stickleback, dace, redbreasted sunfish, pumpkinseed, largemouth bass, brown bullhead, sucker, as well as northern pikeminnow, gambusia, killifish, and thousands of bullfrog tadpoles, which were disposed of at an upland site. The bullfrog tadpoles are definitely the dominant species at this time, and could develop into a considerable problem if control measures are not taken.

Statewide Steelhead Resource Management Plan (RMP): The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process began for WDFW's statewide steelhead RMP with a current focus on Puget Sound with the release of the Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of EIS on August 22, 2006. A total of six public meetings have taken place throughout the month of September in Mount Vernon, Tukwila, Olympia, Port Angeles and Ellensburg, Washington. In order to accommodate requests from Vancouver residents, a public meeting was held on Monday, October 2 at the WDFW Southwest Region 5 Office. The scoping public meeting deadline for comments was extended to October 3. Public meeting attendance has been on the low side, however those attending have been very vocal in their recommendations for steelhead management and dedicated to the recovery of steelhead in Puget Sound.

A few common themes have emerged from the public meetings including 1) a recommendation to focus on habitat issues for steelhead in Puget Sound; 2) importance of historical steelhead data and relevance to the steelhead science paper and RMP development; 3) the current "one-size-fits-all" management approach for steelhead will not be effective; 4) a need for wild fish management zones; and 5) an understanding of the department's limited budget and desire to support the agency's effort to attain more funding for steelhead recovery. All comments are being compiled and will be taken in consideration as alternatives are being developed within the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Thank you to all WDFW who assisted with the public meetings.

The statewide steelhead RMP is underway with co-manager meetings scheduled for October to complete the individual watershed templates for Puget Sound. Monthly stakeholder meetings continue this month reflecting recommendations from a diverse group of interests including the Wild Steelhead Coalition, the Hatchery Scientific Review Group, Washington Trout, and members of the WDFW Steelhead and Cutthroat advisory council. WDFW expects to complete the statewide outline and Puget Sound component of the RMP by the end of 2006.

PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Skookumchuck Hatchery: The Capital Programs and Engineering (CP&E) Division is in the process of soliciting bids for the Phase 1 improvements to the Skookumchuck Hatchery. Bids were opened in the CP&E Division Office on September 28, 2006. The project includes a new hatchery building, eight rearing ponds, a pollution abatement pond, and associated electrical wiring and water supply piping.

Ocean Sport and Troll Salmon Fisheries – In-season Modifications: Regulations for ocean sport and commercial salmon fisheries North of Cape Falcon, Oregon, were modified the week of July 24 due to the slow rate of catch for both chinook and coho salmon. Sport fishing rules adopted by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council in April included weekly five-day openings for all areas from the mouth of the Columbia River to the U.S.-Canada border. Through Sunday, July 23, only about 10% of the chinook salmon quota for this fishery had been taken. Coho catch rates were greater than chinook, but still were slow. Managers agreed that changing regulations to allow salmon fishing 7-days-per-week and a two salmon bag limit (previously only one chinook was allowed) beginning August 11 would not jeopardize attainment of the goal of a full summer season. Similar action to relax initial restrictions was taken for the non-Indian commercial troll salmon fishery. Very low catch of both chinook and coho and very few participating trollers in the July fishery convinced managers to modify weekly landing and possession restrictions that were designed to achieve a longer season and higher total economic benefits from the fishery.

Columbia River Fisheries: Three public meetings were held the week of September 11 to discuss Columbia River recreational and commercial fisheries. The Upriver Bright fall chinook (URB) run size was downgraded by 50,000 fish, resulting in an emergency closure for chinook retention in the recreational fishery of the mainstem Columbia River from Rocky Point/Tongue Point upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco. The fall season recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam has been ongoing since August 1 and catch rates, at times, have been some of the best in recent history. The recreational fishery above Bonneville Dam was just getting started when the closure for chinook was announced. The sport fishery, in total, has slightly exceeded its allocation of Upriver Bright chinook with the current run size. Run sizes will continue to be updated for several weeks and will dictate management decisions regarding operation of fisheries.

The Columbia River Compact met on September 14 to consider treaty Indian and non-Indian commercial seasons. The commercial late fall fishery will be reduced from recent years because of the run size downgrade, the ESA listing of lower Columbia coho, and the overage in the recreational fishery. One 12-hour fishing period was scheduled for the week of September 18. Future Compact hearings will likely occur weekly to set additional fishing periods for coho and white sturgeon. Prices paid to commercial fishers this fall have been above average and are expected to continue.

ICC Meeting Report: The 17th session of the U.S./Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on Fisheries was held in Kaliningrad, Russia on September 13-15. In addition to an exchange of information on fisheries, marine mammals, and impending legislation, work continued on drafting a comprehensive agreement for coordination of research and management of marine resources in the northern Bering Sea. Russia had been reviewing the draft from the 2005 meeting and provided comments and introduced several new concepts that the U.S. will consider prior to the next meeting. Work was essentially completed on the cooperative enforcement agreement that will accompany the comprehensive agreement. There was some discussion about scheduling an extra meeting in 2007, prior to the annual meeting, which will be hosted by the U.S. in September 2007. However, no commitments were made to an extra meeting. The primary stumbling block to completion of the agreements is the two countries' differing views on establishing reciprocal fishing privileges in the northern Bering Sea. Russia desires them – the U.S. does not.

Washington Cattlemen's Association (WCA) Pilot Projects: Edd Bracken, Mark Quinn, Bob Dice, and Mel Asher toured part of the Smoothing Iron Unit of the Asotin Wildlife Area with members of the Washington Cattlemen's Association Pilot Project Grazing Committee. The tour was organized to show members current habitat conditions on the wildlife area, and to discuss issues related to livestock grazing and wildlife management on Smoothing Iron. Topics included status of existing water developments, existing fences, the importance of elk calving habitat from mid-May through mid-June, and public use. In addition, Edd Bracken, Bob Dice, and Mel Asher attended a WCA sponsored meeting to discuss the Smoothing Iron Pilot Grazing Project. Twenty-two people attended including the grazing committee. Edd, Bob, and Mel gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the area and highlighting agency management goals for the property. They answered questions about water availability, fences, and the type of monitoring that is being conducted. They also answered questions about this year's grazing on Pintler Creek, and initial plans for the Shumaker Unit. Several ranchers expressed appreciation for the agency's efforts on the pilot projects in general.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Farm Bill Briefings: In Washington D.C., Don Larsen participated with other state representatives of AFWA's Farm Bill Working Group in Farm Bill informational briefings for both House and Senate Agriculture Committee staff members. We presented AFWA's draft Farm Bill position paper and received feedback. This coincided with a briefing involving a study that examined what would happen to federal spending and commodity prices if the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was eliminated. Under current price support programs, eliminating CRP would result in an overall cost increase to taxpayers and a reduction in farm income in many areas. To see the actual report, click the following link: www.eesi.org/briefings/2006/Ag&Energy/9-7-06CRP/briefing%20notice.htm

Community Service Effort to Revive: Officers responded to a call from The Last Resort on the Tucannon of a 72-year-old female who was unconscious. Apparently, the woman had choked while eating and her companions were not able to clear the obstruction before she lost consciousness. Ultimately, her airway was cleared and upon arrival, Officers and a Garfield County Sheriff's Officer performed CPR on the victim until an ambulance arrived, but she could not be revived.

Tribal Elder Passes On: Officers represented the WDFW and attended the funeral of Katherine Joseph, a 91-year-old and highly respected Sauk-Suiattle Tribal elder, leader, and inspiration.

Tribal Harvest: Tribal harvest of elk from the Colockum elk herd generated a lot of questions and concerns from non-tribal hunters during the archery elk season, which ended September 21. The overlap of tribal and non-tribal hunters is unfortunate, but the Colockum area is within the ceded area of the Yakama Nation, where tribal members have reserved hunting rights.

Elk seasons in the Colockum area started in August and will continue through the winter, so harvest estimates won't be available until next spring. However, during the 2005-06 seasons, the estimated non-tribal harvest from Colockum Game Management Units was 730 elk. The composition of the harvest from last year was 69 branched bulls, 359 spike bulls and 302 antlerless elk. During the same season, we estimated that tribal hunters harvested 25-30 branched bulls. We don't have information on the tribal harvest of spikes or antlerless elk, but we expect the numbers are much smaller. So, tribal members probably take less than 5 percent of the total Colockum harvest each year, but they may take 25-30 percent of the branched bull harvest.

We will be talking with the tribe about these issues and our concerns about management of age structure and maintaining numbers of mature bulls.

Confused Tribal Gill-Netter? Officer responded to a call for service from a citizen who observed a subject set a gill net in Marine Area 9. This area is not open to commercial fishing, either state or tribal. Upon arrival, our Officer contacted a Tulalip Tribal member with net out. The subject stated he thought the area was open, and he had a "piece of paper" somewhere to that effect. However, it could not be produced. A check with Tulalip biologist confirmed the area was CLOSED to netting. Several Coho, Chinook, and other fish were onboard. The Tulalip biologist offered the explanation that the fisher may have been confused as to where the legal area is Marine Area 10 (MA 10). The NavNet showed the fisher to be 2.4 nautical miles south of Marine Area 8-2, which closed 24 hours earlier; and he was 4 miles north of the open area MA 10. A referral to the Tulalip Police was hand delivered.

Tribal Hunting Case Successfully Prosecuted: Officers met with the Prosecutor's Office to work out a final plea agreement for a tribal hunter who shot three elk on private timberland. The individual was initially charged with three counts closed season, three counts wastage and trespass. The plea agreement included two counts of hunting big game (elk) closed season, two counts of wastage of big game (elk), \$5,500.00 in fines and penalties, 2 years probation, and a 365-day suspended jail sentence.

Tribal Hunting: Officers conducted a late night patrol in the Colockum in response to complaints that tribal members are shooting large bulls in the reserve, taunting archery hunters at all hours of the day and night, and driving on closed roads. No violations were observed. Officers also responded to a complaint that tribal members were flipping off local hunters on their way out of the area. The Reporting Party (RP) advised our Officer he was trying to catch them to see how big the bulls were in the bed of the tribal hunter's truck. Officers advised them not to "chase" them as this likely was perceived as a threat and led to the RP being flipped off. Officers explained the tribal hunting rights, which did not satisfy the RP, who told Officers he would be writing to the Director of WDFW. Officers received a report of tribal members "slaughtering" a herd of elk with shotguns near the Colockum Monument. Officers responded to the area and found no evidence of a "slaughter" but did find one fresh set of very large hooves and 30 older legs (boned-out) at the tribal camp. The tribal members have been camped in the Colockum since around Labor Day.

Tribal / WDFW Campout: Officers conducted a two-day patrol on Lake Roosevelt. The patrol was originally scheduled as a joint patrol with Colville Tribal officers. Tribal officers cancelled out at the last minute on the joint patrol, but did attend the campout. The campout was a good social event and hopefully will generate more participation by Tribal officers to our overtures for joint patrols.

Tribal Fish Prosecution: A WDFW Sergeant and a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Special Agent worked with Lummi Law and Order to investigate a Lummi purse seine fisherman for falsifying a fish ticket. The fisher eventually confessed to falsely reporting over 3,500 pounds of Chinook as being caught in Bellingham Bay. The fish were actually caught in the Fraser River sockeye fishery near Point Roberts. The evidence indicates this was an intentional attempt by the fisher to manipulate catch-reporting data. Lummi Fisheries representatives were contacted and advised so they could amend their Chinook catch data. The incident will be referred to Lummi Law and Order for prosecution.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area (CWLA) Patrol: Officers worked an emphasis on the CWLA and Tacoma City Light lands for fires and closed area violations. They issued 26 citations and booked one felony warrant in one evening. Officers contacted a camper on the south shore of the CWLA who was blocking an access gate. The camper did not want to provide identification and was observed tossing his wallet under a vehicle. As it turns out, another of our Officers booked this subject a month before for the same offenses and attempting to flee from his warrants.

Cougar Kill In Jefferson County: A WDFW Sergeant was called out on a report of a cougar that had killed a goat near Quilcene. The reporting party had awakened at 4:00 a.m. at the sounds of his pet goat being attacked. He went outside to locate his pet and found a cougar lying on top of it, finishing the kill. From a distance of about thirty feet, the unarmed R/P threw gravel at the cat without success. Returning to the house, the reporting party called 911. Our Sergeant arrived at the scene soon afterward, but the cougar had taken its kill into the brush and out of sight. Attempts were made to locate a local houndsman, but the list has become very short for qualified individuals. Finally, a hound hunter from Clallam Bay agreed to bring his dogs and attempt to locate the cougar. Three hours later, the houndsman arrived, and put his dogs on the scent. The dogs struck a hot trail immediately, and within about three minutes had the cougar treed. After the cougar was dispatched, an inspection of it showed goat hairs stuck in its claws and a full stomach. The cougar was a healthy looking adult male weighing about 140 pounds.

Vessel Seized For Major Violation: WDFW officers conducted surveillance on a suspect who had for years been suspected of taking major overlimits of crab from the Birch Point area. He had previously been convicted of Unlawful recreational fishing in the 1st degree for a major crab overlimit violation. The suspect was observed delivering a large basket of crab to a waiting accomplice. The suspect then went back out and hauled a total of ten more crab pots. When contacted, the suspect had forty-nine crab piled in his boat. The limit for this area is five crabs. The suspect was cited for Unlawful Recreational Fishing in the 1st degree – exceed daily crab catch, operating overlimit gear, and fail to record catch. Since he had previous serious violations and the violation was clearly intentional, the vessel and outboard were seized for forfeiture.

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

Salmon Emphasis:

- **Arrests for No License and Wildfish Retention** – Officers followed up on a complaint from headquarters of subjects snagging steelhead on the Columbia River at the mouth of Biddle Creek, above Interstate 205. While making contact with the landowner, four subjects were eventually seen fishing. Three of the fishers were snagging while using only lead-headed hooks for gear. Two subjects then snagged steelhead simultaneously. Officers were able to watch both come in backwards, one being a wild fish. Both fish were quickly brought to the bank. The wild fish was hidden in some shrubs up the bank. None of the four subjects had fishing licenses and they had accessed the property from a vessel. Seven arrests were made for snagging, retaining wild steelhead, no licenses, retaining foul hooked steelhead and warnings for no license as well as criminal trespass. The illegal fish were photographed for evidence, and donated to the Share House of Vancouver.
- **Illegal Retention in the Gill-Net Fishery** – Officers patrolled the Columbia River salmon gillnet season. Officers contacted two vessels in violation of possessing oversized sturgeon, two vessels in possession of overlimit of sturgeon, one vessel with an oversized net exceeding 1,500 feet, one vessel fishing closed season and one vessel with sturgeon in unlawful condition. Officers seized the oversized net for forfeiture, which had been used to stack 115 Sturgeon on the deck of the vessel. The fisherman’s excuse was that he did not want the fish to swim back into the net when he let them go. Many of them won’t be swimming anywhere. When Officers stepped into the bow to begin releasing the overlimit of sturgeon, they found the mound of fish to be over their boots. The officers’ dedication netted them a total of five hours of sleep in a 38-hour span.
- **Closed Season Salmon Busts** – While off duty, an Officer decided to try some salmon fishing at a San Juan Island local hot spot. Soon after lowering his sport gear into the water he noticed that two gill-netters had also decided to try their luck at salmon fishing. Aware that there was no commercial season set for the day he made a quick call to another Officer who responded by patrol vessel and contacted one of the violators as he was departing the grounds. When asked how the fishing was the individual replied, “the season is closed”. After advising that he knew the individual had fished, the gill-netter told the Officer that he had checked the hotline once he thought it was odd that only one other vessel was commercially fishing. The individual was cited for closed season and *eighty* Sockeye, one Chinook, and one Coho were seized. Officers attempted to locate the other gill-netter, but were unable to on water. Officers relayed information to additional Officers on land who were able to be waiting when the second violating vessel returned to its moorage and Officers made contact and found 17 sockeye, which had been illegally netted. The father and son pair claimed to not know the area they fished was closed. A citation was issued for commercial fishing in a closed area. The fish were donated to the Catholic Community Homeless shelter. This case is an excellent example of the continued need for a coordinated response to commercial fishing violations.

Skagit Bear Case: Officers forwarded 14 charges to the Skagit County Prosecutor’s Office on an investigation involving a bear poaching operation on private timberland. Charges included obstructing, hunting bear with bait, hunting bear closed season, unlawful possession of bear closed season, and illegal possession of a firearm.

"Pet" Bear Escaped from Residence in Rainier: A local Thurston County resident living on Vail-Loop Road lost his pet bear. There was only one sighting since the bear got loose and that was from his immediate neighbor the night it got out. As the bear is a pet it is quite used to humans and used to getting all of its food from humans. The bear is somewhat tame but can still do serious damage as it is around 400-pound. As bear season is open and the location is adjacent to the Vail Tree Farm it is quite likely that a lucky hunter will harvest this bear before its owner can locate it. The owner has been given a culvert trap to use on his property in an attempt to capture the bear if it comes back. He will be in contact with officers daily to provide updates on the trap and the status of the bear. He has done a good job of notifying neighbors of the situation. Thurston County Sheriff's Office and Washington State Patrol are also aware of the situation. The most likely scenario is of this bear showing up in somebody's back yard looking to be fed. The subject also has a cougar, Bengal tiger, and an 800-pound, grizzly bear. These animals are all still contained and have not been loose at all.

Deer & Elk Poaching Investigations: Officers received a report from a Mason County Deputy of a suspicious vehicle with two occupants. The Deputy searched the area and discovered a plastic bag containing what he believed was deer hide and blood. Officers responded and discovered the bag actually contained 4 quarters and 2 back straps from a very fresh deer kill. With the assistance of the Deputy, our Officer was able to track down the vehicle. This contact led him to another suspect. Our Officer continued the investigation the next day, contacted the suspects and eventually was able to gain a confession from the suspect responsible for killing the buck deer. Officers filed charges with the prosecutor.

Upper Columbia Steelhead Fishery: Region 2 staff have prepared a request for an amendment to NOAA Fisheries for permission to harvest excess hatchery fish in the Methow and Okanogan Rivers. Current wild origin steelhead counts are insufficient to open a fishery under the existing permit 1395. However, because of an abundance of hatchery fish, both in terms of absolute numbers and relative to wild fish, the removal of excess hatchery fish has biological merit. The triggers for a fishery under Tier 1 are 500 and 120 wild steelhead for the Methow and Okanogan Rivers, respectively. Our current estimates are 406 (Methow) and 89 (Okanogan) wild fish, whereas hatchery fish abundance is projected at about 5600 (Methow) and 1500 (Okanogan).

On the Wenatchee River we project that there will be sufficient numbers of wild fish to authorize a fishery under Tier 1 of permit 1395 (Trigger = 600 wild fish, current prediction = 728 wild fish). However, there are low numbers of hatchery fish (<1100) and any fishery would rapidly accumulate "take" on wild fish. Additionally, the total projected escapement (hatchery+wild) is currently estimated to be <1900 fish, which is lower than desired for full seeding of the river. The draft WDFW Upper Columbia Management Plan identifies a target escapement of 2500 steelhead for the Wenatchee. Fish program staff (Region 2 and Olympia) will be meeting on Friday 9/29 to formulate a recommendation based on the newest escapement data available.

Geoduck Enhancement Permitting: Intertidal shellfish enhancement staff met with Pierce County officials to proceed with environmental permitting for a planned geoduck enhancement at Kopachuck State Park in 2007. The park tidelands were last planted with geoduck seed in 1996, resulting in a highly successful and popular multi-year sport fishery. Recreational harvesters have harvested virtually all the geoduck clams from that seeding and the beach is ready for enhancement again. The enhancement site could also serve as a controlled experiment in the environmental effects of geoduck seeding.

Cedar River Lawsuit: The state of Washington has been considering their response regarding a lawsuit on the proposed Cedar River sockeye hatchery. A private citizen, Roz Glasser has filed suit against the NOAA regarding their process in approving the proposed hatchery. The suit contends that: 1) NOAA did not comply with the NEPA process in approving this hatchery; and 2) NOAA did not adequately quantify the take of Chinook salmon resulting from hatchery operations.

The City of Seattle has officially intervened in support of NOAA regarding this lawsuit. The State of Washington has been discussing its possible role as an intervener in this lawsuit. On Wednesday September 27, 2006 the state submitted their request to intervene in this lawsuit on NOAA's behalf. The judge is taking this request under advisement but has not yet rendered a decision on this request.

Dove Season Opener: Region Three Officers combined forces with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) agents on an emphasis patrol for the dove season opener. Thanks to some good scouting by both state and federal officers, the patrol was focused on a few fields that had good dove numbers. Officers worked undercover and watched several hunters take limits on the opening morning. Recording vehicle license numbers, the officers waited to see who came back for the evening flight. Officers watched the same hunters return to a field north of Sunnyside and went to the field after watching the hunters for a while. WDFW and USFWS officers contacted the large group at the area. Several over limits of doves were discovered, as well as unplugged shotguns and possession without statements. The field itself was baited with grain by the landowner to entice the doves. Most of the violations will be issued through federal court and will total several thousand dollars in fines. The arrest total for the first two days of the dove season were twenty: 12 Exceed Bag Limit, 2 Possess Birds of Another Without Statement, 3 Unplugged Shotgun, 1 Hunt Without License, 1 Baited Field, 1 False Statement.

Many Rivers Monitored Over Holiday Weekend: Detachment 7 (Mason County) conducted an emphasis patrol to address snagging and tribal/non-tribal confrontations on the Skokomish River over the Labor Day weekend. Officers worked both in uniform and plainclothes to monitor the activities on this popular stream. Over 60 citations were issued during the weekend for a variety of violations. A similar emphasis was conducted on the Puyallup and Carbon rivers where the slow fishing made for a much more peaceful weekend than usual.

Lake Washington Sockeye Season: This summer's estimated catch of 59,000 Lake Washington sockeye salmon was the largest sport harvest on the lake since 1996. The abundant return of sockeye drew large crowds to the lake and, overall, anglers were pretty successful. Lake Washington sockeye final run size for this year was estimated at 472,000 salmon. That's well above the 350,000 fish needed for spawning escapement, leaving a surplus of 122,000 sockeye available for harvest. The surplus – minus about 2,000 salmon for test fisheries – was split between sport anglers and tribal fishers. Sport anglers made about 63,800 trips on the lake and averaged just below one sockeye (.93) per rod this year. The fishery was open for a total of 18 days – the most days of fishing since 1996, when sport anglers caught about 70,000 sockeye during 23 days of fishing. With the purchase of gear, fuel and other angler essentials, coupled with the ripple effect of those out-of-pocket expenses, WDFW estimates this year's Lake Washington sockeye fishery provided about \$8.6 million in economic benefits to the area. The strong return of sockeye stemmed from a combination of good ocean conditions and salmon produced at a temporary hatchery facility on the Cedar River.

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

Drought: In spite of last winter's improved snowpack, the record dry and warm summer is again resulting in new daily record low streamflows in many areas. This, coupled with existing wildfires and continued high fire danger, is affecting early fish returns, hatchery water supplies, and access to WDFW and other lands. It is expected that conditions will persist at least into the next few weeks. The Governor's Water Supply and Executive Water Committees met during the week of September 4 to assess the situation. Currently, a widespread drought emergency declaration is not anticipated or being recommended. While such a declaration would make some state emergency funds available, it is simply too late in the season to make much difference for most interests. In many areas, WDFW staff have already anticipated the need and begun implementing contingency actions. We can expect, however, that limited area state drought emergency declarations may still occur, primarily to benefit failing domestic water supplies. A state drought emergency declaration announcement from the Governor is pending for WRIs 19 and 20 (in part) to provide state funds to assist with efforts to augment failing domestic supplies for Neah Bay and the Makah Reservation.

NPCC Recommends Project Funding for the Largest Fish And Wildlife Mitigation Effort in the World – The Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Program:

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) approved Draft Fish and Wildlife Project Funding recommendations this week. The project-specific funding proposal is located at: <http://www.nwcouncil.org/fw/budget/2007/province/AllProvinces.xls>. This proposed \$448 million expense budget and \$116 million capital budget, to be funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), would shape restoration efforts for Columbia Basin anadromous fish, resident fish and wildlife over the next three years.

BPA has stated that \$143 million annually (\$429 million for 2007-2009) will be available for expense projects. The Council and staff targeted \$153 million annual start-of-year budgets on average, over the period, reasoning that actual expenditures will stay within the BPA limits since delays in project implementation are inevitable each year. In addition, BPA allows up to \$36 million annually for capital projects. The Council's Draft recommendations came in at more than \$10 million under budget in the "basin-wide" category because of a dispute over funding the projects that were identified by BPA to replace the Fish Passage Center.

The Council is now accepting public comment on its draft recommendations through October 6. Based on comments received by project sponsors, stakeholders and the general public, the Council will make final funding recommendations during its October 17-18 meeting in Helena, Montana. In addition, BPA will consider input from the Federal Columbia River Hydropower System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion remand process before it makes the final funding decisions. BPA, a federal power marketing agency, funds the Council's Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program as mitigation for impacts stemming from the construction and operation of the basin's federal hydro system.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers SWRG Meeting: On August 29-30, the Corps of Engineers (COE) held a meeting of the Study Review Work Group (SRWG). The SRWG was established as part of the COE's Anadromous Fish Evaluation Group for the purpose of reviewing and recommending for funding study proposals aimed at improving understanding of improving anadromous fish passage conditions at COE hydroelectric projects on the Snake and lower Columbia rivers. WDFW, along with the states of Oregon and Idaho, federal agencies, and tribal fish agencies are represented on the SRWG. Approximately 47 Preliminary Proposals were presented during the two days of meetings. SRWG member comments were due to the COE by September 19. These comments will help determine which proposals will be funded and to guide iterative development of Final Proposals. Final Proposals will be reviewed November 29, 2006, with final funding decided prior to January 2007.



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

COMPETENCE GOAL:

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

New Employee: A full-time PHS/GMA Coordinator, Jennifer Hayes, has been hired to provide intra- and interagency coordination and communication on the Growth Management Act, Shoreline Management Act, and other land use policy issues, as well as lead the Priority Habitats and Species program. Jennifer has worked for Thurston County as a senior planner dealing with comprehensive planning and policy development under the Growth Management Act (GMA). She has worked with community groups, the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners on a variety of land use planning issues. Jennifer has also worked as a private consultant assisting local governments in Washington State meet the requirements of the GMA, including the development of critical areas ordinances.

Comprehensive Report to OFM and Legislature on HPA Administration: Staff completed a comprehensive report on Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) administration for the Office of Financial Management and the Legislature that spans Fiscal Years 1989-2006. It includes data and analyses for applications and issued HPAs by fiscal year and WDFW Region.

Habitat Program Westside Meeting: Staff from Regions 4, 5, and 6 as well as staff from Olympia participated in a Westside staff meeting held in the NRB on September 19, 2006. Staff had the opportunity to hear presentations on the following topics: Improving Coordination of Fish Passage Projects between TAPPS, Regional Staff, and WSDOT; Q & A on streamline application process; performance measures trends and use; nearshore partnership and watershed mitigation; Skagit County drainage maintenance agreements - A different approach to working with the agriculture community to protect and improve fish habitat; Elwha nearshore restoration; and environmental engineering news. This meeting was well attended and stimulated productive discussions.

WDFW Web Site Usage is Up Again: The WDFW public Internet Website (wdfw.wa.gov) continues to be a major communications tool and information channel for our customers. Statistics for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 show a significant increase in the overall website usage with total visits for the year exceeding 38 million. Web Site usage has doubled over the past three years, and is ten times greater than in FY00. For the WildWatch Cameras, usage in FY06 of 4.6 million visits was more than double the usage in FY05. In FY05, WDFW initiated an e-mail news subscription service that now has over 16,000 subscriptions. Interactive GIS mapping applications on the Web Site have also been very popular. The number of maps made by customers of SalmonScape and GoHunt increased from 886,000 in FY05 to 1,316,000 in FY06.

Forest Practices Board: At the August 9 Forest Practices Board meeting, the Board approved motions that instruct the Department of Natural Resources to continue the rule making process for the first studies to come out of the Adaptive Management program that are coupled with the Forest and Fish HCP. These two rules involve perennial initiation points (PIP) for streams and the “desired future conditions” model. The Board also adopted rules to prevent “decertification” of spotted owl habitat. Decertification is a process that certifies that spotted owls are no longer present in particular areas, thus, allowing timber harvests to proceed. Finally, the Board changed a rule that had allowed habitat that was harvested under landowner plans (such as HCPs) to be counted as habitat when determining suitable habitat remaining. Such habitat was termed “virtual habitat” and is no longer allowable.

Forest Health Strategy Work Group: Staff is representing WDFW on the reconstituted Forest Health Strategy Work Group. The original work group was formed by the 2004 Legislature to identify opportunities to improve the state's forest health conditions and to submit a report to the Legislature on addressing forest health needs on public and private ownerships, with the goal of protecting a wide variety of public benefits. The current work group was reconstituted by the 2006 Legislature as a result of recommendations from the former work group to hold statewide public meetings. The purpose of the public meetings is to inform professionals and the general public on the work group's findings and also to take public comment on proposed legislation for the 2007 session.

Policy Advisory Group: On August 18, a panel representing a broad spectrum of interested parties convened to provide policy advice as state agencies move forward to implement the Columbia River Water Management Program (CRWMP), which passed this last legislative session with overwhelming support and a commitment of \$216 million from the Legislature. The purpose of the Advisory Group is to create a forum for the Department of Ecology to talk with parties about key Columbia River water resource management issues and for parties to build understanding of one another's perspectives and identify areas of common interest.

One of the Advisory Group's first tasks will be to help agencies develop priorities and criteria for funding conservation and storage projects. In addition, the group will play a key role in identifying "preferred alternatives" through the current CRWMP environmental impact statement (EIS) process. A draft EIS will be available for comment this fall.

The first meeting was a success from many perspectives. Perhaps most notable is participation by tribal representatives, including the Yakama Nation. The Yakama Nation did not support the bill creating this new program and was offended that negotiation on final bill language did not include tribes. The Yakama representative indicated the Nation is now at the table seeking a collaborative approach to implementation and to responsible development of new water supplies.

Communication "Summit": On August 25, the Columbia River Implementation Team held a meeting focused entirely on developing an outreach and education strategy for the CRWMP. Topics ranged from structuring public meetings to gather comments on the draft EIS, to the form and content of information posted to the Program website, to identifying key stakeholder groups at which to target specific outreach activities, and developing core presentation materials about the Program that watershed (and salmon recovery) leads can take out into communities.

Forest Practices Board Retreat: Environmental Policy staff attended the annual 2-day retreat of the Forest Practices Board, which entails a day in the field viewing and discussing current issues, followed by additional board discussion the second day. This year's retreat focused mainly on how to identify stream perennial initiation points (PIPs) in the field. The location of the PIP has significant ramifications for how much stream buffer forest landowners are required to retain. Stakeholders have been negotiating a rule change as well as guidance in the form of a board manual on how to locate the PIPs. Consensus has been reached on the rule modifications; however, agreement has not been reached on methods for finding the PIPs in the field, nor the defaults to be used in circumstances when the PIP cannot be observed. Staff will continue to work with stakeholders to resolve the issues in hopes of reaching consensus prior to a board vote to file the CR-103 on the rule changes (either November 2006 or February 2007). During the retreat, the board also adopted its 2007 work plan.

Wells Hydroelectric Project: As part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), Douglas PUD's Notice of Intent and Pre-application Document (PAD) for the new license for the Wells Project is due to FERC December 1, 2006. The License Application is then due to FERC on May 28, 2010. At Douglas PUD's request, interested agencies and tribes have been meeting since November 2005 to work with the PUD to identify natural resource issue study needs for 2008 and 2009. The studies are needed to inform the final application document; providing the basis for the fish and wildlife measures that the PUD will propose to FERC for inclusion in the new license order.

Ocean Policy Working Group: Intergovernmental Resource Management (IRM) staff attended meetings of the Ocean Policy Working Group to develop recommendations for a long-term governance structure to continue to solicit input from the public on ocean policy issues, prioritize those issues, and recommend appropriate actions needed to address them. The objectives of this exercise included: 1) ensuring follow-through on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Washington Ocean Policy Working Group recommendations; 2) creating a structure comprised of representatives from action agencies; 3) ensuring the tribes and local governments were represented; 4) continuing an outreach component; and 5) minimizing the costs associated with ocean policy implementation.

The Working Group explored different governance structures, such as creating local committees like the Puget Sound Marine Resource committees, using Lead Entities and a watershed-based structure, working with the Association of Coastal Counties, and implementing ocean policy through the Coastal Zone Management Act and/or Growth Management Act. After considerable discussion, the Working Group's preliminary recommendation for a state-level governance body is a continuation of a committee with a composition similar to the current working group; that is, a formalized committee comprised of representatives from key state agencies, such as Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Community, Trade, and Economic Development. Coastal tribes and counties would also have seats on the committee and local constituents would act in an advisory capacity.

With regard to a governance structure to address ocean policy issues on a West Coast level (interacting with Oregon and California), the Governor's Office would continue to take the lead. A full description of the governance structure proposals will be included in the Working Group's second report, a draft of which will be available in early October for review.

Big Game Management Roundtable/ September Meeting: The public was invited to the September meeting of the Big Game Management Roundtable for a discussion of issues related to elk displacement from state-owned winter range to private lands in the Parke Creek/Caribou Creek area of the Kittitas Valley. The meeting began with brief discussions and presentations from WDFW staff and a local rancher about elk behavior and the history of elk depredation in the area. Then the 60 or so attendees representing ranchers, landowners, local residents, sportsmen, and ATV enthusiasts worked in small groups to identify what they thought was the primary issue responsible for elk moving to private lands, and how they would go about addressing the problem. Some of the suggested causes for the problem included lack of security on the winter range due to too much public activity, and lack of quality forage to hold elk on the winter range. Suggested approaches to addressing the problems included a shorter and/or later hunting season, no public access while elk are on the winter range, more livestock grazing to improve forage quality, construction of an elk fence, and beginning a winter feeding program.

Roadless Rules: On September 13, federal Judge Elizabeth Laporte, San Francisco, issued a decision in the Roadless Rules case. Washington, in conjunction with California, Oregon, and New Mexico filed suit against the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for repealing a 2001 Roadless Rule enacted by the Clinton Administration. The 2001 Rule prevented road building and timber harvest on 58 million acres of USFS inventoried roadless areas nationwide, affecting 2 million acres in Washington.

In 2005, the Bush Administration repealed the 2001 Rule and replaced it with a state-specific petitioning process that allowed each state to decide how to manage the roadless areas in their states. The states' case and another case filed by environmental organizations and heard concurrently alleged that the USFS did not abide by the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act when it enacted the 2005 Rule. The judge agreed and, essentially, reinstated the 2001 Rule.

Environmental Policy staff, in conjunction with the Governor's Office, has been developing Washington's petition, which essentially mirrors the 2001 Rule. The deadline for states to file petitions, as outlined in the 2005 Rule, is November 13, 2006. Based on likely appeals, the state may still go ahead and file the petition to ensure an essential timeline is met in the event that the case is overturned on appeal.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Recruitment: Interviews were completed for two Wildlife Conflict Specialist positions. Eight candidates were interviewed for positions in Ellensburg and in Pasco. After checking references, the Deer and Elk Conflict Specialist positions were offered to two individuals. Don Hand will be the new Conflict Specialist in Benton and Franklin Counties, and Anthony Novack (from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services) will assume the position for Kittitas and Yakima Counties.

2006 Hunt Unit Maps: Mapping revisions and metadata updates have been completed for the 2006 hunt unit boundaries. A new series of Game Management Unit (GMU) maps (large format), deer area maps, and elk area maps (small format) are now available via the GoHunt Internet mapping application. Hunt unit maps (PDF format) were also sent to each regional office for distribution to the public. The Geodatabase of 2006 hunt unit boundaries has been placed on the anonymous ftp (file transfer protocol) site for download, as well.

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

Plea Agreement Reached on Last Hunt Season Case: Officers made several calls to the U.S. Attorney's Office reference an upcoming suppression hearing from a stop made last muzzleloader season which turned into a felon in possession case and a major drug arrest. The subject took a plea agreement at the last moment. The resulting agreement: he is going to serve 4 years in a federal penitentiary and \$150,000 worth of property was forfeited including 25 guns, a Harley, and all his grow equipment.

Horse Shooting Investigation: A WDFW Okanogan Sergeant took phone calls on a horse shot at State Representative Joel Kretz' ranch and arranged for Officers to assist with the investigation/attempt to find evidence. It is yet unknown if it was malicious or not.

HPA Fish Kills in Skagit County: Officers met with representatives from Skagit County concerning violations of their HPA that resulted in a fish kill in Hansen Creek. They also interviewed the head of Phoenix Corp. that subcontracted work for the County on the project.

Recent Fatal Hunting Accidents:

- Officers responded to a fatal hunting accident near Northport. Two hunters were road hunting for bear, when the 26-year-old passenger placed a fully loaded older style .357 revolver on the console between the seats, according to the driver. The weapon vibrated off of the console and discharged striking the passenger in the head, killing him instantly. The subsequent Stevens County Sheriff's Office investigation revealed that the revolver the passenger placed on the console of the pickup could have vibrated off as indicated by the eyewitness and discharged on impact, striking the victim in the head. Lab tests indicated it only took one pound of pressure in a twelve-inch fall to discharge the weapon. Powder residue was also found on the front of the console and lower dash areas indicating accidental discharge.
- Officers are currently working with Klickitat County Sheriff's Office on a hunting accident where a fatality occurred. According to the Sheriff's Office, the subject was poking at a porcupine with the butt of his rifle when the rifle discharged mortally wounding him in the abdomen. The subject was able to drive to a house and call aid. He was flown to Yakima, but died while in surgery.

ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Grant Program Funds Available for Redistribution: The ALEA Volunteer Cooperative Grant Program has awarded grants to two additional projects for fiscal year 2007. The funding for these projects came from what remained of the balances of the one-year projects that ended June 30 and what was leftover from 2nd round grant awards. The projects selected were next in line as a result of the 2nd round application ratings. We are awarding a total of \$24,657. The new projects, effective July 1, 2006 are:

Williams Creek Bull Elk Mortality Study

\$23,857

An ongoing study whose purpose is to determine an annual mortality rate for antlered elk.

Lake Shore Cleanup – Banks Lake

\$800

The goal of this project is to remove litter from the public recreation areas along Banks Lake Reservoir.

SCIENCE GOAL:

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

2006 Northwest Regional Fish Passage and Screening Workshop: This workshop, coordinated and hosted by WDFW Habitat Fish Screening Technical Assistance and Yakima Construction Shop staff, was held in Yakima on September 12-14. The planning and hosting of the workshop rotates between the three northwest states and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; this year was Washington's turn. Although we planned for 70, there were 129 attendees, including staff from the fish screen shops in the three northwest states, other state and federal agencies, consultants, and other interested parties. WDFW staff did an excellent job in planning and presenting the workshop. In addition, Regional Director Tayer provided the workshop welcome, and WDFW staff provided eight of the 30 presentations at the workshop. The workshop seemed to go very well, and staff received numerous positive comments from other attendees on the quality of the workshop. BPA has requested that WDFW provide the PowerPoint presentations for posting on the BPA website. The next workshop will be in Idaho in 2008. Special thanks to the planning team of Eric Egbers, Pat Schille and Sonia Ortiz from Habitat and Chuck Lenberg, Ray Gilmore, and Kevin Fulks from the Yakima Construction Shop (YCS), Business Services, and to the other YCS and Habitat staff that assisted during the workshop.

Cedar Creek Dam Removal Fish Monitor: Representatives from the Fish, Habitat, and Wildlife programs as well as the Kalispel Tribe and two local volunteers conducted Year 2 fish monitoring on Cedar Creek. This is the first year of monitoring following the removal of the Cedar Creek Dam last October. Year 1 was done just prior to dam removal. Last year, of 772 trout inventoried, 98.6% were eastern brook trout (non-native), 0.012% westslope cutthroat trout (native), and 0.003% rainbow trout and rainbow x cutthroat hybrids (non-native). This year, of 235 trout inventoried, 63% were eastern brook trout, 20% westslope cutthroat trout, and 17% rainbow trout and rainbow x cutthroat hybrids. While the number of fish inventoried in the study area (approx. 1,000 lineal feet upstream of former dam location) was down from Year 1, there has definitely been a shift in species composition away from brook trout. As the newly created habitat features "settle in" and the riparian area starts to reestablish, we should see improvement in fish numbers as well.

Taneum Creek Coho Reintroduction: Region 3 Director, Jeff Tayer and RFPM, John Easterbrooks participated in a meeting with Yakama Nation (YN) Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) staff and two directors from the Taneum Canal Co. (TCC) to discuss the re-introduction of coho salmon into Taneum Creek and other Kittitas Valley tributaries to the Yakima River. TCC has worked cooperatively with the state and federal fish agencies and the YN to significantly reduce winter stock water use, which benefits ESA-listed summer steelhead and resident rainbow trout. YN's YKFP coho biologist and WDFW Science Division staff working in the Ecological Interactions Team (EIT) in Ellensburg want to test the feasibility of expanding coho reintroduction program to smaller tributaries that have not supported coho for many decades... primarily due to irrigation development that blocked passage and dewatered the lower ends of the tributaries. The meeting provided an opportunity to explain the proposed coho tributary program to the irrigators and alleviate their concerns about potential impacts to their summer irrigation water rights. It appears that the Taneum Canal Co. may be willing to sign on as a cooperator on the project.

Shared Strategy, Water Quantity Committee: Recently, the Committee recommended approval of a ranking methodology developed by WDFW and Ecology to assist watersheds with prioritizing streams for low flow enhancement. The Committee also recommended that \$40-50K in available funds be used to further develop and pilot this methodology. The goal is to have a scientifically valid and user-friendly tool to assist watershed groups and others in prioritizing streams and reaches for low flow enhancement. We expect that salmon recovery goals would become a key component of the final prioritization and actual project design. IRM and Habitat Program staff continue to be instrumental in moving the work of this Committee forward.

South Fork Nooksack Spring Chinook Supplementation: Permitting finally fell into place on August 24 allowing biologists from the Lummi Nation, Nooksack Natural Resources and WDFW to install the adult collection weir near Skookum Creek hatchery in the South Fork Nooksack. The program, to be housed at the Lummi Nations Skookum Creek Hatchery, will collect and spawn natural origin early timed adult chinook and raise the progeny to yearling smolt for release. To ensure that 100% of adults used for broodstock are early timed South Fork origin the WDFW genetic lab in Olympia will compare DNA from all adults collected to “baselines” of both early timed South Fork and North Fork stocks as well as Fall Chinook from Kendall Hatchery.

Tiger Muskie Update: Efforts continue to maintain our popular tiger musky program. Tiger muskies are a sterile cross between female muskellunge and male northern pike. They were first introduced into Washington in 1988 and are currently in seven waters totaling 11,700 surface acres. Extensive studies have shown that they are not a risk to native species when stocked in appropriate waters and low densities as WDFW has done. However, they do provide a popular trophy fishery for warm water anglers. Our latest freshwater angler survey showed an estimated 16,000 anglers (3% of licensed anglers) make 56,000 trips per year to fish for tiger muskies. This generates approximately \$7.5 million in economic activity annually in the state.

The fishery has been dependant on receiving tiger musky eggs each year from Minnesota’s DNR. This is the only disease free and aquatic nuisance free egg source currently available. Initially, Minnesota indicated that they were discontinuing the tiger musky egg program. Thus, we began exploring options for maintaining this important fishery.

After considering the comments on the initial SEPA DNS and further discussions with Minnesota DNR staff, who are now indicating they will continue supplying tiger musky eggs, we are re-evaluating all alternatives. Our goal is to thoroughly evaluate all feasible alternatives that do not pose a risk to other species. Staff will be updating you at the November meeting with the most current information on this issue and the potential actions we will be considering.

Agency's Hatchery Spring Chinook Supplementation Studies On Tucannon River of SE Washington to be Published by American Fisheries Society: The manuscript, "Supplementation of an ESA-Listed Spring Chinook Population with Management Implications" has been accepted for publication in Fourth World Fisheries Congress. The paper is a follow up to a poster presentation at the World Fisheries Congress in Canada in 2004, and discusses the effects of the hatchery spring Chinook program on the natural population of Tucannon River spring Chinook. Authors were Michael Gallinat, Joe Bumgarner and Mark Schuck of the Snake River Lab, and Glen Mendel, District Fisheries Manager for SE Washington. The American Fisheries Society will publish the proceedings in book form in 2006.

SaSI Data Collection on the Web Debuts: On August 2, the Biological Data Systems (BDS) Unit of the Fish Program's Science Division launched a new application designed to allow Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI) data providers to submit and review annual stock data updates via the Web.

More than 500 SaSI stocks are currently recognized for salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and cutthroat in Washington. A data "provider" has been assigned to each stock, along with one or more data "reviewers" (including both WDFW and co-manager experts). Once the provider has entered a new escapement estimate for a stock, E-mail is automatically generated to the reviewers to notify them about the new or changed estimate. Reviewers contact providers if they have any comments; once satisfied, a simple return E-mail updates the "reviewed" section of the SaSI database for that stock.

The system is also piloting the use of automated E-mail "reminders" as the due date for annual updates for each stock approaches. "Past-due" notices have been implemented as well during this first (pilot) year. This is the first time BDS staff have integrated E-mail, a Web application, and a corporate data repository stored in the NRB, thanks to the skilled efforts of Dong Nguyen with support from Mike Keeling (ITS). It will be a year of learning for us all!

We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of dozens of state and tribal fish biologists to contribute their expertise to creating this SaSI data repository and we appreciate their patience as we work out the bugs in this new system. Hopefully, this will pave the way for implementation of similar Web applications to speed data flow and simplify the task of moving key data from the field to headquarters.

Micro satellite Identification of Captured SF Nooksack Chinook: WDFW genetics laboratory recently assisted the Lummi Tribe with their efforts to begin a South Fork Nooksack Spring Chinook supplementation program. Tribal biologists captured 12 adult Chinook from the SF Nooksack River. Our genetics laboratory ran micro satellite DNA analysis on samples from these 12 fish. Of the 12 fish captured, 8 were NF Nooksack Spring Chinook, 2 were NF Nooksack Fall chinook, and 2 were identified as NF chinook, race ambiguous. The rapid turnaround on the analysis allowed the tribe to keep the fish for later spawning. However, based on the genetic information, none of the captured fish were used as broodstock.

Use of Single Nucleotide Polymorphism identification of Chinook by-catch in the commercial sockeye fishery: Fin-clip samples were collected by WDFW samplers from live Chinook salmon caught as by-catch in the 2006 Area 7-7A non-treaty purse seine sockeye fishery. The WDFW Molecular Genetics Laboratory analyzed these samples to determine their stock-of-origin using a micro satellite-based mixed-stock genetic analysis. From this analysis we estimated that the 44 samples were composed of the following stocks (with percentage range of stock composition, incorporating estimated error): 1) South Puget Sound, 0-2%; 2) Lower Fraser R., 10-18%; 3) South Thompson R., 76-84%; 4) North Thompson R., 0-4%; and 5) East Vancouver Island, 0-4%. One fish was definitively identified as being from Puget Sound, either from Soos Creek Hatchery or Voights Creek Hatchery. However, because the genetic baseline is currently incomplete for Puget Sound, this fish may have originated from elsewhere in Puget Sound (e.g., Green River natural spawning).

Lummi tribal biologists also collected samples from Chinook by-catch from this fishery. The 292 samples were received in the genetics lab this week and are currently being processed.

Cedar River Summer 2006 Trout Population Sampling Completed: Fish Program staff members from the Science Division and Region 4 in collaboration with King County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completed three weeks of field work (July 24-August 10) to estimate rainbow and cutthroat trout population sizes in the Cedar River between Renton and the Landsburg bridge. A tremendous amount of data was collected during this short period due in large part to the collaborative nature of the project and the number of staff members generously provided by Region 4, numerous units of the Science division, King County and USFWS. Trout were sampled in river reaches using a barge electrofisher unit, floy-tagged, and then re-observed via snorkeling and recaptured with the electrofisher to provide data necessary for estimating population size. Length was recorded and DNA and scales collected from approximately 1,300 trout in order to provide an age-based estimate for both species. Approximately 600 of these trout were sampled for diet content and PIT tagged in order to assess trout movement patterns within the river and Lake Washington. Future detection of these tagged trout at the Ballard Locks PIT antennae array will provide an estimate of the proportion of Cedar River trout that are juvenile steelhead. Data are currently being processed to calculate the age-based population estimate. USFWS and King County staff members will process diet samples this fall in order to estimate consumption. (Staff will be giving a briefing to the Commission at the November meeting)