Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

October 12-13, 2007

"A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife"

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

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

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

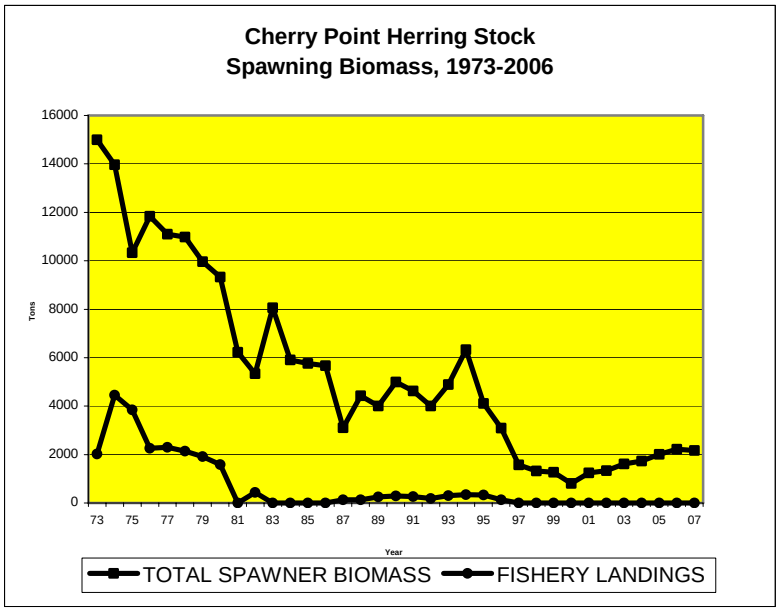
Wild Spring Chinook Collected on the Naches River: Wild spring Chinook salmon from the Naches River were collected and artificially spawned to serve as controls for Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project study of inadvertent domestication. Eggs collected from the fish are being incubated at Nelson Springs in a "misting incubation system" until a pathogen screening on the adult fish has been completed. This type of incubation is used because the Nelson Springs site does not have enough water to support the traditional method of salmon egg incubation. Eggs collected from second-generation hatchery fish (hatchery control line), first-generation hatchery fish (supplemented line) and natural origin upper Yakima River spring Chinook are also being used in these studies. Results that examined the consequences of artificial propagation on first-generation hatchery fish originating from the CESRF have been published in the peer-reviewed literature.

Olympia Oyster Restoration Conference: Staff attended the three-day West Coast Olympia Oyster Restoration Conference at which Director Koenings gave the keynote speech. The most valuable information gained from this conference is that Olympia oyster populations in different areas tend to be genetically distinct. Even within southern Puget Sound, gene flow between embayments appears to be restricted or non-existent. This information should be useful in setting guidelines for the use of hatchery-reared native oyster "seed" in restoration projects. Presentations on restoration efforts in San Francisco Bay and at various other sites in California and Oregon showed that, by comparison, our Puget Sound native oysters are doing quite well. Our agency's North Bay site was brought up in a number of presentations as a goal for restoration projects in Oregon and California.

Curl Lake Diversion Project Almost Complete: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) maintenance employees continued installing an Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliant diversion on the Tucannon River this week. The diversion provides water for Curl Lake, which is used by the Tucannon Hatchery for acclimation of listed spring Chinook, and also stocked with catchable rainbow trout after the spring Chinook smolts are released each year. It is being constructed using natural materials, including complete trees recovered after the School Fire in 2005. It includes resting pools, protective cover and other design elements friendly to fish. This project is a cooperative effort, funded by the Inter-Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) and Lower

Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP), and sponsored by WDFW. Barring any delays, the project should be completed this week.

Cherry Point Herring: Region 4 staff has completed the abundance assessment for the Cherry Point stock of herring. The assessment has produced a spawning biomass estimate for the Cherry Point stock of 2,166 ton. This amount is similar to last year. The distribution of the spawn is shown in the table below. (*Kirt Hughes, Region 4)*



WSDOT Fish Passage Inventory Completion: With the completion of WRIA 29 on August 29, 2007, WDFW fish passage inventory crews completed the inventory of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) highways for fish passage barriers. This was no small task as crews worked year-round for 9 years, covering 7,200 miles of state highways, inventorying over 6,900 road culverts with approximately 1,800 of them assessed as barriers to fish passage. The initial inventory began in 1991 and was completed in 1998, inventorying culverts blocking upstream passage for salmon and steelhead. The inventory was expanded in 1998 to evaluate all culverts under WSDOT roads for all salmonid species, including salmon, steelhead, searun cutthroat and resident trout. Congratulations to all those involved in the completion of the inventory and their commitment to the resource. (Technical Applications – Caudill)

Puget Sound Nearshore Project: A document titled "Puget Sound Nearshore Project Priorities: Assessing Consistency between Local and Regional Strategies of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan" was published and distributed. Last year WDFW funded three Puget Sound Lead Entities to form a work group to evaluate salmon recovery actions in the nearshore. The group was asked to analyze consistency between nearshore recovery strategies developed at two different scales of analysis in the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan: fine-scale actions developed at the watershed scale, and broad strategies developed at the regional scale. WDFW hopes this analysis will lay the foundation for the ultimate goal of developing an interim work schedule for salmon recovery actions in the Puget Sound nearshore. This analysis will be vital for the new Puget Sound Partnership in developing the 2020 Action Agenda, which will provide a

"roadmap to a healthy Puget Sound." This analysis will also aid future project and funding prioritization efforts undertaken by federal, tribal, and state resource managers, funding entities, and local watershed restoration groups. (Environmental Services – Vigue/Mitchell)

Wells Hydro Project: Staff is coordinating with Assistant Attorney General Frymire, Region Two staff, and Intergovernmental Resource Management in developing an Off-License Agreement with Douglas PUD (DPUD). This approach is a response to a change in policy at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). In recent licensing decisions, FERC has become less inclined to require continuing mitigation activities in areas that are outside the project boundaries of new or established projects and/or entail long-term funding of such measures. The Off License Agreement is proposed to protect two important mitigation measures at Wells that fall outside project boundaries. These are continuing mitigation of the reservoir-inundated native whitefish fishery using trout fishing recreation relocated to lakes in adjacent Okanogan and Douglas counties and continued funding of the Wells Wildlife Area. These activities are popular in the local area and DPUD seems interested in insuring their continuation. (Major Projects – Eldred).

WSDOT project proposal: Region 3 staff collaborated with WSDOT to design and implement a comprehensive bank protection project along the Naches River within the city of Yakima that incorporates bio-engineering components, habitat structures, grade controls and land acquisition within the floodplain. A more comprehensive reach analysis approach was used after several past attempts to protect the state highway using standard bank armoring techniques had failed and other activities by other landowners in the area threatened to further exacerbate an already unstable and confined stream reach. The project proposal will provide increased near-shore habitat complexity that is much better vegetated than the current conditions. The large woody debris to be incorporated into the armored bank will also provide increased habitat and production benefits that will be determinate upon the life of these structures and their ultimate design. Overall, it is our opinion that in the long term this project will improve habitat while better addressing chronic lateral scour and erosion throughout this reach of the Naches River. (Region 3 - Harvester)

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly: On September 11, 2007, as recommended by WDFW and DNR, the Forest Practices Board (Board) unanimously voted to adopt a voluntary protection approach for the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (TCB) versus adopting a forest practices rule. WDFW and DNR will provide the Board with annual reports regarding progress of development of TCB site management plans and any species protection issues.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission listed the TCB as a state endangered species on March 2, 2006. The butterfly is also a federal candidate species. Eleven of the 13 Washington occupied sites are within forested landscapes where it occupies sparsely vegetated balds and ridge tops surrounded by forestland in southeast Thurston County and northern Clallam County. DNR and a few private timber companies own most of the TCB sites.

On May 10, 2006, the Board, prompted by WDFW's input, determined there was sufficient potential risk to TCBs from certain forest practices to consider rulemaking and other protection strategies and directed DNR to consult with WDFW experts, landowners, and other stakeholders to determine an appropriate protection approach.

DNR and WDFW hosted many stakeholder meetings since April 2006 to educate stakeholders on butterfly life history, habitat requirements, potential effects of forest practices, etc., and received input on protection strategy options.

In August 2007, and as a result of stakeholder and internal discussions, WDFW proposed an approach to protect TCBs that does not rely on a forest practices rule. Due to commitments to work with WDFW from the major forest landowners who own occupied sites and/or adjacent forestland, and given the low number of small landowners involved, it is thought the benefits of such a strategy outweigh the risks. Benefits include more landowner collaboration, including willingness and support to participate in planning and protection and also restoration of degraded habitat. As a safety net, DNR will use its conditioning authority to prevent material damage to TCBs from forest practices applications.

The next steps are to continue to work with DNR Lands and private forest landowners on development of TCB habitat management plans. WDFW, in conjunction with leadership from the Washington Farm Forestry Association, will also be attempting to meet with the few small forest landowners that own portions of occupied butterfly sites to discuss their anticipated forest management activities and the possibility of developing management plans.

Online Crab Catch Reporting Tool: The Licensing Division, in conjunction with the Fish Program, implemented a new website that the public can use to report their crab catch for the season. Originally scheduled for deployment on September 4, the tool was delivered by Outdoor Central (OC) on September 5. Although this was one day late, the site has proven to be a very effective tool for the public and the Department. Over 35,000 users have utilized the site and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. In addition, the site reduces paper costs to the Department and significantly reduces the amount of returned cards the Fish Program has to track and allows the Fish Program to process the information more efficiently. The ease-of-use of this tool has surpassed expectations. The Division wishes to thank Rich Childers for his work on this project.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – WDFW Land Exchange: Lands Division's Olympia staff met with the DNR staff to review the status and progress on statewide land exchange elements. The appraisals are nearing completion. Title review is underway as reports are received. Processes for the Shoreline Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and cultural resources reviews were discussed. The intent being to complete the SEPA/NEPA review after the final exchange parcels have been identified, following completion of the appraisals. DNR and WDFW will work together to communicate cultural resource protective measures to the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Wildlife Corridors Project: Science Division Manager John Pierce has joined the Science Team of the Western Governor's Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative. The initiative is in response to the Western Governors' Association unanimously approved policy resolution (07-01) "Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West." The Wildlife Corridors Initiative is a multi-state and collaborative effort to improve knowledge of and management for migratory corridors and crucial habitat. Promoting best practices for development where it occurs, reduction of harmful impacts on wildlife, and integrating migratory and crucial habitat into planning decisions are the overarching objectives for implementation. The initiative will be structured to

make both scientific and policy recommendations to the Governor through a Science Committee and five working groups.

Chelan / Douglas District – Pygmy rabbit recovery: Good news! While surveying Sagebrush Flats for evidence of additional pygmy rabbits, an unknown Pygmy Rabbit was observed. Dave Hays, Ronald Fox, Lucas Mallon and Jeff Heinlen all observed one uncollared pygmy rabbit sitting at the entrance of an artificial burrow. This is the same artificial burrow that earlier in the year, Washington State University (WSU) graduate student Len Zeoli observed a juvenile pygmy rabbit. Including the remaining male continuing to persist, this makes two Pygmy Rabbits left in the wild. With the assistance of WDFW staff, Len plans to capture the both pygmy rabbits. Staff would like to scan the newly discovered rabbit for an embedded chip to make sure it is a new rabbit, collect DNA to determine sex and linage, collect fecal material for disease testing, and attach a radio collar.

PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Crab Catch Record Accounting System: The Puget Sound summer recreational crab fishery season ended on September 3 and summer catch reports were due by September 15. This was the first year of implementation of the two catch card system (summer/winter) for the Dungeness crab fishery and requiring fishers to report catch information in-season either by mailing their catch cards or reporting on the Internet. At the close of the reporting period (Sept 16), a total of 32,746 fishers reported their crab information on the Internet site and approximately 30,000 mailed their cards to the Department. Mailed cards are still being processed and the exact number of returned cards will be available in early October. A total of 210,026 Puget Sound crab endorsements were sold as of September 3, and a telephone survey is being conducted on a random sample of the 147,280 fishers that failed to report by the September 15 deadline. Rich Childers will be presenting the results of the new catch accounting system and the summer recreational catch numbers at the December commission meeting.

Upper Columbia Steelhead Fishery: This year's steelhead run to the upper Columbia will provide anglers with an opportunity to fish for hatchery-origin steelhead on the Methow, Okanogan, Wenatchee and Columbia Rivers. These fisheries allow anglers to harvest excess hatchery origin fish, providing a recreational opportunity and conservation benefit to natural origin fish on the spawning grounds. Steelhead fisheries are covered by an Endangered Species Act Permit and are only allowed when sufficient numbers of natural origin fish are present in spawning tributaries.

Commercial Grower Enhancement Planning: Staff met with Bill Dewey, a spokesman for the Puget Sound Shellfish Growers Legal Defense Fund (PSSGLDF), which has agreed to provide the state with ten years of shellfish enhancement on public tidelands as part of the recent legal settlement with treaty Tribes. The total value of the shellfish enhancement will be half a million dollars, either as a cash contribution or as clam/oyster seed, equipment and materials, or labor. The objective is to improve recreational clam and oyster opportunities on public tidelands. Board members of PSSGLDF will meet to discuss our agency suggestions on the most cost-effective method for providing this enhancement to the state, and the timetable for starting the project.

Crab Creel Sampling: In an effort to validate the weight conversion factor used in making recreational Dungeness crab catch estimates in Puget Sound, staff undertook intensive creel sampling. Recreational crabbers were sampled along Hood Canal, the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, and in southern Puget Sound. The goal of this creel sampling was to obtain length and weight data for sport-caught Dungeness crab. Surveys were also conducted to examine comparative use of the red rock crab resource in different Marine Areas. Staff from Regions 4 and 6 weighed 589 sport caught Dungeness crab in seven Marine Areas over the last several weeks. Staff is sampling again this weekend but have already covered 15 different sites from Olympia to Port Angeles. While the average weight does differ by Marine Area, this difference is generally small. The grand average weight across all marine areas is 1.80 pounds per crab, and for catch estimation we can use this average for all MAs, simplifying calculations and streamlining the process. Red rock crab surveys indicate substantial use of the resource in southern Puget Sound along the Nisqually Delta and comparatively less fishing pressure in Port Townsend Bay.

North Cascade National Park High Lake Fisheries: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has implemented a fish stocking program in the North Cascades since 1933. During the 1960s anglers were part of a broad constituency that supported the creation of North Cascades National Park (NCNP). Although the enabling legislation did not explicitly mention fishing or fish stocking, many interpreted the testimony leading up to the park's creation in 1968 as assuring continuation of the State's fish stocking program.

The WDFW continued to manage fish in the park even as NPS philosophy on fish stocking moved in a different direction. The growing opposition of NPS to fish stocking was based on assumed ecological impacts and culminated in congressional intervention and a legal decision in 1988 to continue co-managed stocking while studying the impacts of fish in high lakes. In 2002 the studies had been completed and NPS invited WDFW to act as a cooperating agency in the development of an EIS for fish management in high lakes of the park.

Close examination of the science led local NPS and WDFW staff to conclude that periodic stocking of non-reproducing fish at low densities was unlikely to have significant impacts in deeper larger lakes in the park. Whereas, excessively reproducing populations were generally detrimental, especially in shallow, small lakes that supports native amphibian populations. Based on these findings, the agencies worked together on a preferred alternative that allowed continued stocking in some lakes while targeting the removal of fish from others. However, the NPS felt it needed clarification on their enabling legislation to allow them to enter into a co-managing relationship with the state where they could execute this alternative.

Last month Representative Hastings reintroduced a bill in the House that would provide the congressional clarification that the NCNP says it needs to continue the cooperative fish stocking program. This bill, HR 3227, uses the same language as the bill introduced last year and is co-sponsored by Representatives Larsen, McMorris, and Dicks. However, none of these members is on the sub-committee for National Parks, so it is now incumbent upon WDFW and interested constituents in the angling community to help move this bill forward.

Puget Sampling Unit—Monitoring Selective Chinook Fisheries in Puget Sound: Areas 9 & 10: The Puget Sound Sampling Unit conducted intensive monitoring during the first-ever summer selective Chinook fishery in Puget Sound Marine Areas 9 and 10, from July 16th through July 31st. Intensive sampling activities included dockside creel surveys to estimate catch and effort, on-the-water surveys to estimate proportions of effort at access sites in the fishery, and test fishing to estimate encounter rates and mark rates in the fishery.

The Areas 9 and 10 selective Chinook fishery began on July 16th with tremendous popularity among the angling public. This was the first time that Areas 9 and 10 were open for Chinook fishing during the summer since 1993, providing anglers a unique opportunity to catch Chinook salmon in the middle of an urban area. Marine Areas 9 and 10 were managed under a combined quota of 7,000 retained hatchery Chinook; of that quota, only 1,700 Chinook could be harvested in Area 10. In total, the fishery was open for 16 days; the Area 9 portion of the selective Chinook fishery was open from July 16th through July 31st, while the fishery in Area 10 was open from July 16th through July 28th.

In total, sport anglers made approximately 26,500 trips during the selective fishery and averaged about one harvested Chinook for every four anglers. With thousands of anglers participating in the fishery, we estimate that the fishery provided a substantial boost to the local economy. With the purchase of gear, fuel and other angler essentials, coupled with the ripple effect on the economy of those out-of-pocket expenses, we estimate that the Areas 9 and 10 selective Chinook fishery provided approximately $3.5 million in economic benefits to the area. Areas 5 & 6: The Puget Sound Sampling team is currently conducting intensive monitoring for the selective Chinook fishery in Marine Areas 5 and 6 for the fifth season.

West Coast Emphasis Patrol: The Strait and Coastal marine detachments participated in a three-state emphasis to monitor a commercial fishery. A combined effort from WDFW, OSP, CDFG, NMFS and the USCG was facilitated and officers from WDFW's detachments boarded/contacted nearly 100 percent of the commercial fishermen in the area. Very few if any violations were observed. The weather was poor at times, ensuring challenging boarding conditions. Some recreational vessels were also boarded and violations observed included: over limit of salmon, using five lines (instead of one), possess undersized Chinook, possess undersized Coho, fishing closed areas, use of barbed hooks, fail to record catch, no licenses, and numerous boating violations. (Statewide Marine Division)

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

Shoreline Restoration Projects: Fifteen projects, including the largest estuary restoration effort in Puget Sound to date, are receiving $6.8 million in state funding to preserve and restore natural shorelines and estuaries. The funds will be disbursed through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), which was established by the Legislature in 2006 as part of Governor Gregoire's Puget Sound Initiative. WDFW administers funding for the program.

Funds will be used to match other local, state, and federal resources to implement the 15 protection and restoration projects from the Canadian border to Olympia. The estimated total value is more than $26 million.

Nine projects funded last year are currently under way throughout Puget Sound, including the removal of dikes to restore acres of marsh at the Skokomish Estuary. (See paragraphs at end of this section regarding the Skokomish Dike Removal.)

The Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership assisted in project selection and its executive committee endorsed the final spending plan. The Partnership, which is a regional organization working to develop a comprehensive nearshore ecosystem restoration plan for Puget Sound, is co-chaired by WDFW and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Skokomish Dike Removal Begins Large Estuary Restoration in Hood Canal and Puget Sound: On September 10, 2007, the tides of Hood Canal fully inundated 108 acres of the old Nalley farm for the first time in 75 years. The land, once used for growing hay, is now owned by the Skokomish Tribe and is being converted back to river delta tidal marsh so it can be used for growing fish. The project is the largest dike removal to date in Hood Canal. Mason Conservation District, the Skokomish Tribe, and Tacoma Power and Light collaborated and managed construction, principally funded by the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program under the guidance of the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership. NOAA's Restoration Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all contributed resources to the collaborative intergovernmental venture.

The project aims for full restoration of natural processes. All dikes were removed, allowing sheet flow of flood and tidewaters across the site and full access to the historic delta by the sediment-laden Skokomish River. Tides and river are anticipated to cut new channels, deposit sediment, wood, and seed recreating the historic habitat structures that support endangered summer chum and chinook salmon as well as a diversity of estuarine-dependent species whose populations will be strengthened by restoration of critical estuarine habitat. Monitoring or recovery will be completed by the Tribe in collaboration with DNR and compared to adjacent reference habitat and natural dike breach areas to better document the value of complete dike removal. The next phase of the Skokomish Estuary Restoration will involve over 200 acres of marsh restoration on the adjacent Nalley Island. Several thousand acres of large scale tidal restoration are currently being planned on Dungeness, Nooksack, Skagit, Stilliguamish, Snohomish, and Nisqually River deltas, with tidal marsh restoration occurring at many small creek mouths across Puget Sound.

Region 6 Office:

In an effort to improve energy consumption 192 light fixtures were replaced with energy saving fixtures at the Region 6 Office, located on Devonshire Road in Montesano, Washington.

Damage Complaint Contacts: Region One officers contacted numerous landowners reference damage complaints. Many landowners are very upset regarding their ineligibility to submit damage claims pursuant to our new WAC defining public hunting. Most of these same landowners were forewarned over a year ago regarding the new standards and definitions of public hunting in a mass mailing letter that went out last year. As a result, Officers are responding to numerous big game damage claims and are running into considerable problems scheduling assessors since there are only two on

contract for the eastside. The contractors are booked with harvest being about time frames throughout the eastside. (Region 1)

COMPETENCE GOAL:

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

Wooden Boat Festival: In partnership with the Washington Department of Health and the Jefferson County Health Department, staff hosted an informational booth at the three-day 31st Annual Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend. This is the most popular public event where we host a shellfish booth, and attendance was estimated at approximately 25,000 people. We gave away over 350 crab and clam measuring gauges, several cases of Sport Fishing Rules pamphlets, a case of public shell fishing sites pamphlets, as well as lots of literature on shellfish health closures. The most popular part of our display continues to be the iced live shellfish specimen tray, and this year we added a live tank to display a large moonsnail, rock scallop and geoduck in the act of siphoning. The WDFW Shellfish Dive Team provided a number of interesting subtidal specimens to complement the shellfish collected intertidally. As in past years the geoducks stole the show, although all the critters elicited plenty of "Ewww...gross", "COOL!" and "Yummy!" responses. After the Festival, all specimens were donated to the Port Townsend Marine Science Center for use in live displays and as food for existing exhibits.

Outreach and Education: The Outreach and Education Program is in the middle of its busiest part of the year. Two county fairs are now completed with the Puyallup quickly on their heals.

The Thurston County Fair saw 1,200 youth participate in the fishing pond catch and release fishery, with many catching their first fish. The Mossyrock Hatchery provided some beautiful fish for this fair, thank you Mark Johnson, complex manager! The venue started out with 750 fish and with only eight lost to hooks, the remaining fish were transported to the Lakewood Hatchery where they will be rehabilitated and used for one or two other events scheduled this coming October and November.

The Clallam County Fair saw approximately 600 youth brave the cold weather and heavy rains to catch their first fish. Temperatures were low and the rain kept many fair attendees home, but the bite stayed on throughout the event and everyone that fished caught one. The Valhalla Hatchery provided 500 hundred Daniels strain Rainbows and with no fish lost during this fair, all were taken and planted in Carrie Blake Pond (juvenile waters in Sequim) for the youth in the area to "Go Play Outside" and catch dinner.

Saturday, August 25, we will again take our fishing pond out and set it up at the Lacey Sportsman's Warehouse for a fun filled day of youth fishing activities. Sportsman's has been a great supporter of all our "Fishing Kids" and youth fishing activities and this is a great chance to say thanks to them.

In addition to the fishing venues of the past couple weeks, staff working with the Salmon in the Classroom Program provided staff and leadership to approximately 250 youth at an Environmental Leadership Camp held at Cispus.

With the Puyallup Fair on our heals, FISH Outreach and Education staff will be setting up and taking on the challenges of seeking staff and volunteers to help spread the word about fishing and the many opportunities that we provide to the residents of this state. If you have time, give Pat Kelly a call or drop an email to him to help make the Fair as big a success as the last two fairs have been to date.

Log Jams and Debris Accumulation in Issaquah Creek: WDFW Habitat staff have been working intently with the city of Issaquah staff to address concerns for potential backwater flooding on Issaquah Creek caused by accumulating logs and woody debris. Responding to concerns of local residents, WDFW staff have negotiated effective management of several logjams and fallen trees that could potentially cause backwater flooding during large storm events. The Area Habitat Biologist has expeditiously issued the necessary Hydraulic Project Approvals to accomplish the work before the fish return this fall. (Region 4 – Fisher)

Clark County Integrated Project Review and Mitigation Tools Initiative: The Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) has been coordinating a permitting and mitigation pilot in Clark County. WDFW has been a strong partner and advocate for the approaches being tested. IRM continues to collaborate with Habitat Program staff, participating in the project's steering committee and coordinating with Habitat staff on the Development and Design Team. The Governor demonstrated her support of the project by hosting an early September agreement-signing event for local, state, and federal project partners. IRM is also participating in the Habitat Program-led Mitigation Workgroup, which provides insights that complement this permitting and mitigation pilot.

Game Division Public Opinion Questionnaire: The Game Division is conducting a public opinion questionnaire to help identify key issues that should be addressed in the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. The information gathered will be used to help update the current plan originally developed in 2003 as a tool to guide the long-term management of game species. Once the results are analyzed, they will be incorporated into a draft plan that will go out for public comment early next spring. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider this plan for final approval.

WDFW Website Update: Lands Division Manager Mark Quinn and Lands Landowner Incentive Coordinator Ginna Correa met with WDFW Web Master John Burrows and Information Technology Specialist Doug Hoyer to review major makeover plans for WDFW's website and specifically the Lands Division Web information. The new format will rely heavily on information contained in the recently completed Wildlife Area Plans and accommodate direct entry from the main agency page. Maps and access information will also play prominently in the new site.

SCIENCE GOAL:

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

Workshop II on Use of Genetic Methods in Ocean Salmon Fishery Management: Last week in Vancouver, B.C., the Pacific Salmon Commission held the second in a series of two workshops on the use of genetics in ocean salmon fishery management. The workshops were a result of recommendations from the 2005 expert panel report on the future of the coded-wire tag (CWT) system, which urged that more use be made of

genetic methods, and that to make this happen, work be done on how to incorporate genetics more fully into management of ocean salmon fisheries. The workshop consisted of four teams of experts, each headed by a paid coordinator, in the subject areas of management, modeling, genetics, and logistics.

The first workshop, held in May, provided background for development of papers addressing specific key questions, and the papers were presented at the second meeting. Several WDFW staff members were involved in the workshops: Craig Busack (Genetics and Steering Committee), Heather Bartlett (Management), Annette Hoffmann (Modeling), Jim Packer (Modeling), Kris Ryding (Modeling), Ken Warheit (Genetics), Denise Hawkins (Logistics), Brodie Cox (Logistics), and Brad Thompson (Genetics). Warheit, Hawkins, and Packer all gave presentations at the second workshop.

Much work remains to be done in terms of working out details for incorporation of genetic methods. However, the workshop series was quite successful in increasing comfort with and understanding of the use of genetics. This was done in part by exposing people to novel uses of genetics that have no CWT equivalent.

Possibly the most important specific result to come out of the workshop series is likely to be a recommendation to have genetic databases subjected to a standards committee and have them maintained by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) in a manner as similar as possible to the current CWT data storage system. Results of the workshops will be summarized in a report in January or February.

Coastal Black Rockfish Stock Assessment and Management: During the week of September 10th, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council adopted the Black Rockfish stock assessment model that will be used for management from 2009. The status of this important coastal resource is healthy – 53.9% of the un-fished population. Agency staff from the Marine Fish Science Unit, Inter-governmental Resource Management Group, and the Science Program worked collaboratively on this long and work-intensive project to ensure that the best available science are applied to the management of the Black Rockfish resource off the Washington coast. The results of this effort will ensure that Washington's coastal recreational and charter boat fishery for this valuable species is not artificially constrained due to inadequate information.

Levels of Dissolved Oxygen in Hood Canal Higher than in 2006: Hood Canal typically suffers from low levels of dissolved oxygen, especially in September and October. In 2006 the low levels resulted in a substantial kill of fish and invertebrates in the southern part of the Canal. Through September 11, 2007, the levels of dissolved oxygen were higher than at the same time last year. Additionally, there is a large layer of well-oxygenated water (from the surface down to 20 meters), which can support aquatic life. Both of the factors indicate that the chances of a kill in the Canal are less this year than they were last year. Oceanographers speculate that the improved levels of dissolved oxygen are a result of the cloudy summer we had this year. Cloudy conditions means less sunlight; less sunlight means less algae. Typically the algae die in the fall and use the available oxygen in the water, resulting in the low dissolved oxygen levels.

Molecular Genetics Lab Submits Eleven Southern Fund Proposals: The Molecular Genetics Lab developed and submitted eleven proposals to Pacific Salmon Commission Southern Boundary Fund last week and collaborated with WDFW staff on two others. The eleven lab-generated proposals range from $9,000 to $210,000, and total $1,244,424. Proposals were over a wide range of topics, including a supplementation project,

development of tools for genetic mixed stock fishery analysis, analyzing mixed-stock fisheries, and a coast-wide genetics meeting.

Fourteen New Chinook SNPs Identified: This week, the Molecular Genetics Laboratory submitted genotype data for 14 new Chinook SNPs (single nucleotide polymorphisms) in 20 populations ranging geographically between the Unuk River in SE Alaska and the Feather River in California. These data were submitted to the GAPS (Genetic Analysis of Pacific Salmon) consortium for inclusion in the pool of SNPs that are available for use by genetics labs coast-wide. SNPs show great promise as a fishery analysis tool, as they should be less expensive to process and not require the interlab standardization that microsatellites require. Snips will also allow us to explore genetic variation at loci that are under artificial selection, something we cannot do with microsatellites. This work was conducted under a contract with the Pacific Salmon Commission.

Skykomish Mitigation Bank: WDFW Habitat staff met with the owners, developers and neighbors of this extensive mitigation banking project immediately south of the city of Monroe in Snohomish County. At the meeting and site review, there were also representatives of the County, a County Council member, and a state representative. The purpose of the meeting and site review was to introduce regulators to the mitigation banking project and discuss the validity of promoting the banking concept. Because this particular mitigation bank includes the restoration of off-channel fish spawning and rearing habitat, the potential for the exchange of mitigation credits for hydraulic projects was also discussed. No significant conclusions were reached; however, this was a good introduction to the concept of mitigation banking and re-confirmation of the need for watershed-wide analysis to help guide restoration and mitigation efforts. (Region 4 – Brock)

Avian Influenza Surveillance Summary: Wildlife Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield completed an avian influenza surveillance summary that describes surveillance and testing results from birds collected in Washington from July 2005 - July 2007 where a total of 4,395 water-associated birds were tested. Five hundred eighty-nine (13.4%) samples tested positive for the presence of an Avian Influenza Virus (AIV). Of these, 510 (11.6%) were viruses other than an H5 or H7 subtype, 76 (1.7%) were an H5 virus; and 3 (0.1%) were an H7 virus. All H5 and H7 subtypes were of low pathogenicity to poultry, and no H5N1 subtypes were detected. Avian Influenza viruses were detected at rates and from species that were expected, based on numerous surveys done in the United States over the past several decades. Based on samples collected from wild birds in Washington, and previous surveys performed elsewhere, it appears that highly pathogenic AIV's are rare in wild birds. WDFW will continue surveillance in wild birds, with particular emphasis on sick and dead birds, to ensure timely detection of highly pathogenic H5N1, or any other highly pathogenic AIV's, should they enter the United States. A copy of the complete report is available from the Wildlife Science Division in Olympia.

EMPLOYEE GOAL:

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

WDFW Fish Biologist – received National Honors for "Best Paper" at this year's American Fisheries Society 137th Annual Meeting: Julie Henning, Fish Biologist was recently honored at the American Fisheries Society 137th Annual Meeting in San Francisco for her award winning paper in North American Journal of Fisheries Management. She was presented with the Mercer Patriarche North American Journal of Fisheries Management Best Paper Award for 2006. Her paper (Henning, J. A., R. E. Gresswell, I. A. Fleming. 2006. The role of emergent wetlands as potential rearing habitats for juvenile salmonids. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 26:367-376) is Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife work that shows that emergent wetlands may play a more important role for coho salmon than previously realized. The authors discovered that although the coho were only able to make use of the wetlands a few weeks a year before being driven away by low oxygen levels, those young coho found in the enhanced wetlands had better growth and survival than those found in unenhanced wetlands or oxbow ponds.