

# Wildlife Program

Week of August 20-26, 2012

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

### *GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE*

**Mazama Pocket Gopher Survey Access** – Staff from Diversity Division, Science Division, and Region 6 coordinated an access response to identify at least 1,107 prospective locations that are available for plot surveys based on private and public responses to queries about access.

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

**District 1:** Assistant District Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf issues with John and Jeff Dawson in regard to their grazing allotments on the Colville National Forest. Assistant District Biologist Shepherd and Officer Weatherman checked a cattle carcass for wolf and human sign in the Wedge. Assistant District Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker worked on setting up a Radio-Activated Guard system. Technician Baker coordinated with volunteers and contacted the Forest Service about road closures. Technician Baker and Volunteer Janey Robson also responded to reported wolf activity, continued to set up a Radio Activated Guard (RAG) box, and then observed wolves. Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker learned the Community Event Registration & Volunteer Information System (CERVIS) and set up a profile and event. Technician Baker and Volunteer Janey Robson checked and re-baited trail cameras in the Kettle Mountains. Assistant District Biologist Shepherd performed Smackout deer survey count and then spotlighted for wolves and cattle. Technician Baker delivered wolf traps to Carter Niemeyer in Spokane and retrieved trail cameras in the Huckleberry pack area. Technician Baker and volunteer Amanda Charron checked trail cameras in the Wedge.





*Officer Weatherman and Technician Baker set up a Radio-Activated Guard box in Smackout meadows.*

#### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Reported Grizzly Bear Observation:** District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base prepared and routed documentation to the Wildlife Program Data System at Olympia Headquarters for a recent observation of a grizzly bear in the Wedge including the photograph listed below. This bear was observed and photographed by multiple individuals including a Stevens County reserve sheriff's deputy. This is the fifth distinct individual grizzly bear confirmed in the Wedge this year.



*Grizzly bear photographed in the Wedge, Game Management Unit 105 on August 11, 2012.*

## Wildlife Areas

**Late summer at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area** - Both lakes have now dried up. However, two nearby ponds still have water in them, as they are small and spring-fed.



*West Swanson Lake, left, and East Swanson Lake, right, August 23, 2012.*



*Small “turtle pond” located just south of the West Swanson Lake, August 23, 2012.*

**Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Cache Creek Fire:** Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice was notified by Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on Tuesday of a wildfire burning near Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands in the Shovel Creek Area. The fire was ignited by lightning near Cache Creek on U.S. Forest Service (Wallowa Whitman National Forest) land and quickly spread into Washington and the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. As of this writing, the fire is 43,000 acres in size and continues to spread south further into Oregon. Virtually all lands on the Chief Joseph wildlife area bordered by the Snake River, Grande Ronde River, and Joseph Creek Road have burned. Currently, 783 people are assigned to this fire which is being managed by the Central Oregon Type 2 Management team based in Joseph,

Oregon. Fire suppression activities on WDFW lands have concluded with remaining work consisting of mop up and rehabilitation of dozer lines. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is using wildlife area headquarters fields for a spike camp. Approximately 200 firefighters are being fed and sleeping on the wildlife area. Wildlife Area (WLA) staff have assisted USFS with set up and operation of the spike camp. The camp may be on the wildlife area for a few more days. Some tree and shrub plantings near Joseph Creek have burned. The stock fence which separated Magden land from WDFW land has also burned in places. The fence is not on the property line and follows ridge lines. Assessment of damage to this valuable fence which prevents trespass grazing, will take place as soon as possible. Due to the rough topography of lands in this part of the State, use of aircraft for fire suppression has been heavy. Large Chinook and Skycrane helicopters were used along with massive C-130 military planes making retardant drops along ridge lines. Dice traveled to Joseph, Oregon three times this week to attend meetings on the fire. Joseph is about a 2 ½ hour drive away from Clarkston. On Friday, Dice and NRW Greg Heimgartner moved the WLA Helicopter dip tank from the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area to Joseph Creek. David Woodall moved one of our five-ton military trucks equipped with a 1,700 gallon water tank on Friday as well. We made our equipment available to the firefighters.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area lands south of the Grande Ronde River have no fire protection and DNR is not willing to provide that service. Initial discussions of USFS billing DNR for fire suppression and having DNR bill WDFW were stopped when USFS finance personnel learned there is no formal agreement for protection by DNR. As a result, USFS has no mechanism for billing WDFW and has decided not to pursue billing the State for suppression costs. However, USFS will accept from WDFW an agreement where the agency allows USFS use of wildlife area lands and some equipment for their spike camp in exchange for suppression. In the future, we will be seeking an agreement with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for protection of the wildlife area. Since USFS has an agreement to provide protection for BLM, the protection document would allow services on WDFW lands. BLM lands neighboring the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area are part of the Vale, Oregon District which is close to Ontario, Oregon.



*Fire progresses towards Joseph Creek on Friday morning.*



*Supper time for firefighters as flames crept downhill towards Joseph Creek on Friday evening. There were 40 elk on the hillside just below the flames when this picture was taken.*



*Chinook Helicopter making water drops near the old school house along Joseph Creek.*



*Mount Wilson just east of the WLA buildings burning on Thursday morning.*



*Firefighters work near WLA headquarters buildings.*



*Retardant drop near Lime Point with each drop costing approximately \$20,000.*



*Sikorsky Skycrane Helicopter pulling over 2,000 gallons of water out of the Grande Ronde River near the mouth of Joseph Creek. Two of these ships were working the fire Friday morning.*

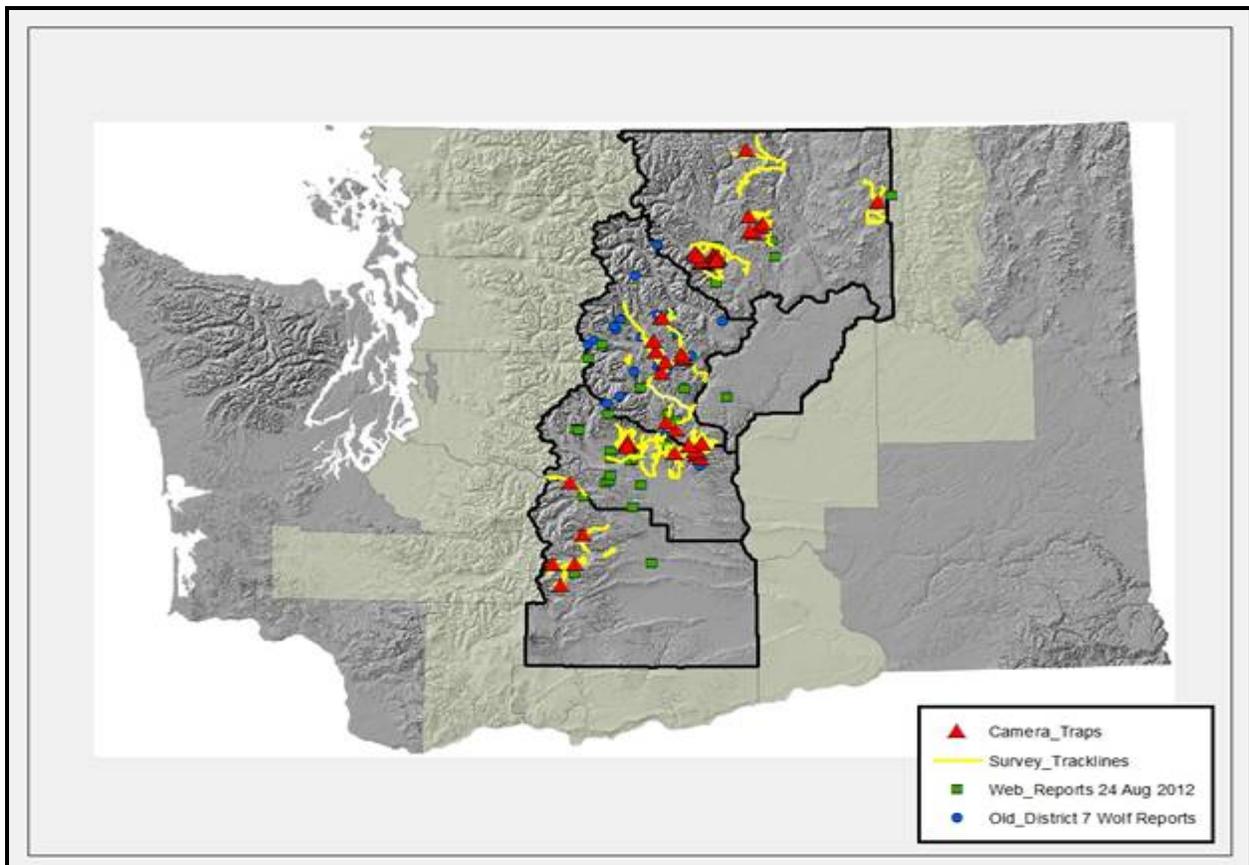
## **REGION 2**

### **Wolves**

**District 7:** Technician Spence finished a circuit of surveys in Okanogan County and then moved to Yakima County searching for sign of wolves. Two new cameras were placed in Okanogan County in an area of known wolf activity associated with the Lookout pack. In Yakima County he worked in the south fork of the Tieton and set one camera in the drainage. No sign or tracks were found. He then surveyed areas in the Little Naches and set one camera. No sign or tracks were found, however, he felt the area warranted more attention and will return there this week. The north fork of the Tieton was searched again, one camera checked and another new camera was set.

Web reports have been minimal. No new reports were received over a period of several days and those that have come in either did not warrant attention or were from areas where we know we have an active pack. We continue to screen reports to identify areas of possible activity. With the onset of hunting seasons, we should receive a greater numbers of reports. While no new wolves have been observed, videos of numerous wildlife species, like young black bear, continue to be recovered.

Roughly 650 camera nights of monitoring have been completed in Regions 2 and 3. A map of monitoring activity to date is included below.



## **District Biologists**

### **District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie**

**Weather Conditions:** Hot and dry, again this week.

#### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Jackrabbits:** Biologist Gallie started work on a jackrabbit research project for District 7. Little information is available on historic numbers of rabbits in the district. Current distribution and density are unknown. Each year we accumulate random observations of rabbits while conducting surveys across Douglas County and from that we develop a feeling for the numbers of rabbits and their population trend. Biologist Gallie is looking into the feasibility of developing a more rigorous methodology for inventory. Work was started by coordinating with other biologists focused on jackrabbits, both within the state and at the national level. This year's work will provide a framework for moving on to the next step of a dedicated survey methodology.

#### ***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Student Project:** Biologist Volsen met with a high school student from Stehekin, WA to discuss a project monitoring a wolverine camera trap over the winter. The student's family recovered images of wolverines using a site in the Stehekin Valley, and have volunteered to maintain and monitor a formal camera trap in the area. Biologist Volsen is in contact with USFS researchers and will help the student set up the station.

## **Wildlife Areas**

### **Methow Wildlife Area Complex - Tom McCoy / Rob Wottlin / John Haegan**

#### ***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**End use of surplus buildings:** The first group of surplus buildings sold at auction on the Lloyd Ranch has been completely removed. We have another individual who has come forward and offered to take at least two more of the buildings. This will mean that nearly all of the buildings at the Lloyd Ranch have been surpluses and put to use by private citizens, saving WDFW thousands of dollars in demolition costs. We are very pleased how this project is turning out. The first picture below is of a pair of "picker sheds" that was surpluses from the Judd Ranch last year. The second picture is of one of these sheds after renovation. It is an active fruit stand along HWY 153 below Carlton.



## **Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Complex – Greg Fitzgerald / Brian Cole / Roger Nelson**

### ***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

**Middle Crab Creek Enhancements:** Greg met with Biologist Finger, Engineer Gina McCoy, and Columbia River Water Management Coordinator Charity Davidson on site at an area of the Supplemental Feed Route that appears to be especially prone to streambank erosion. Options for stabilizing the streambank were discussed and Gina McCoy will produce a plan based on those discussions.

Brian continued ground preparation for weed control on the 220 acres of the dense nesting habitat development portion of the Middle Crab Creek (MCC) Enhancements, including disking a Russian knapweed patch and mowing Kochia and Russian thistle patches.

Greg met on site with Biologist Finger, Specialist Becker, Private Lands Biologist John Cotton, and Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA) member Dick Price at the Spud Field Reach portion of the MCC to plan for riparian and diversity habitat development. Dick Price was successful in his application for Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) Grant funding for this streambank stabilization project, with the work being conducted with WWA equipment and volunteers, with assistance from Wildlife Area, Private Lands, and District Biologist equipment and personnel.

**Columbia Basin Irrigation Project Cooperative Weed Management Area:** Brian attended the second meeting of the potential members of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) organized by the US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). Statewide Weed Coordinator Dave Heimer was also in attendance representing WDFW. The CWMA is an agreement between several state and federal agencies and irrigation districts to coordinate aquatic weed control efforts through the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project. Items discussed were issues needing to be addressed in development of the CWMA.

## **Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

**Spurge Flax Survey with Okanogan County Noxious Weed Office –** Assistant Manager Haug met with Larry Hudson of the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board to perform a survey of the Class A noxious weed Spurge Flax (*Thymelaea passerine*) on the Horse Spring Coulee Unit of the Sinlahekin. This weed can be found on western parcels adjacent to the wildlife area in varying densities. No spurge flax was found on the wildlife area, but many other weeds were documented and mapped to aid in the control this fall. The Class B designate Rush Skeletonweed was also targeted during the search with none found. This is a new species to the county and found less than one mile away from the wildlife area.



*The Horse Spring Coulee Wildlife Area. Justin Haug photo.*

## **REGION 3**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Areas**

Wildlife Area Managers Shana Winegeart (L.T. Murray), Cindi Confer Morris (Wenas), and Ross Huffman (Oak Creek) met with Range Ecologist Jeff Burnham and toured parts of their respective Wildlife Areas to continue Jeff's orientation process and to discuss upcoming projects and range monitoring.

### ***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

#### **Private Lands/Access**

**Register to Hunt:** Private Lands Biologist Ryan Stutzman met with Jennifer Diaz from Puget Sound Energy's (PSE) Wild Horse Wind Farm and discussed extending their access contract. PSE will be extending their contract for five years with minimal changes in contract language, primarily including additional recently acquired acreage.



*View from Wild Horse Wind Farm visitor center.*

**Corn Stubble Program:** Access Technician Pat Kaelber continued contacting farmers about hunter access to corn and wheat stubble fields. He has at least two producers in Franklin County who have committed to entering ground for the start of dove season and leaving that acreage for the duration of waterfowl season.

## **REGION 4**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Skagit County Moose Sighting:** Biologist Danilson followed up with a citizen who reported a moose sighting within the Skagit County portion of the North Cascades National Park. This is the first reported moose sighting for the year and is relatively close to moose sightings over the past couple of years. While the number of moose sightings in Region 4 remains low, biologists with WDFW and other agencies agree that they appear to be on the increase and are working together to follow up and document these sightings.



*A lone bull moose observed by a hiker the week of August 13 in North Cascades National Park.*

**Pelagic Cormorant Nesting Survey:** Biologist Cyra completed the data tables from this summer's Pelagic Cormorant Nesting survey in the Northern Puget Sound and submitted the data to Olympia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey. It appears that this cliff nesting bird has moved away from many traditional nesting locations in favor of human-made structures, including navigation aids and dock pilings. Numbers may have decreased from historical figures.

**Swans:** Biologist DeBruyn assisted Canadian Wildlife Service biologists in interpreting data collected during last year's swan carcass collection. DeBruyn also responded to a question from the Bird Banding lab regarding a band return last year from a 20-year-old swan. This is one of the oldest known wild trumpeter swans on record.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Lake Terrell Dam Remodeling Project:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom Conservation District manager on the dam remodel project. Preliminary site prep work has been completed. This important project to allow fish passage past the Lake Terrell dam will begin next week.

**Tennant Lake Wetland Enhancement Project:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the Port of Bellingham managers on the wetland enhancement project site. The construction work for phase one is now almost complete. Due to the area being wetter than expected, the final reed canary grass control on the site has been pushed out two weeks.

**Cherry Valley Unit Waterwheel Creek Project:** Manager Paulson had a final Waterwheel Creek pre-construction meeting with the Wild Fish Conservancy and their construction crew. The construction crew will bring in heavy equipment to dig the Waterwheel Creek channel at a rate of 2000 cubic yards a day.



*The construction crew for the Waterwheel Creek Restoration Project on the Cherry Valley Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area will bring in equipment to dig the Waterwheel Creek channel at a rate of 2000 cubic yards a day.*

**Deadwater Slough Fencing Project:** Manager Paulson researched possible Deadwater Slough fencing options with the Snohomish County Conservation District. Deadwater Slough is located on the Ebey Island Unit. Cattle that graze the unit often use the slough as a watering facility. While the slough is not connected to the Snohomish River, keeping the cows out of the slough is a goal of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

**Wildlife Management**

**Western Mallard Model Work:** Biologist DeBruyn continued to trap ducks at three trapping sites in Whatcom County. DeBruyn trapped and banded 32 mallards and two wood ducks this week (as well as numerous re-traps of previously trapped birds). The primary objective of this project is to provide data on survival for long-term population modeling of western mallard populations.

**North Cascades Elk Herd Radio Telemetry Check:** Biologist Danilson conducted a final check on radio collared bull elk in the North Cascades Herd. Through this effort, all but one of the radio collared bulls have been located prior to the beginning of 2012-2013 hunting season. During past hunting seasons, radio collared bulls have been lost due to hunter harvest and wounding loss. This check will improve biologists' ability to discriminate between hunter related and non-hunter related bull mortality over the course of the next four months.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Whidbey Island Private Lands Access Deer Hunt:** Biologist Roozen continued drafting agreements for both the Whidbey Camano Land Trust and private landowners to facilitate deer hunting access on the Island. Roozen is developing signage for the properties and assisting the Land Trust in creating maps that delineate additional adjoining acreage.

**2012 Westside Pheasant Release Locations:** Biologist Roozen attended to logistical and administrative tasks associated with developing the new pheasant release site in Skagit County. Due to the protracted process involved in finalizing agreements with DNR and a private landowner for parking, many details involved in site preparation are being fast tracked to prepare the site in time for the pheasant opener.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Biologist Roozen continued drafting contacts with potential partners throughout Region 4 and met with several current and potential partners. There are currently about 25 Skagit and Whatcom County properties enrolled in the program for the upcoming hunting season and negotiations on several others are underway.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Samish River Unit:** Manager Belinda Rotton has been coordinating with Sergeant Rich Phillips regarding management of public access on the dike for fishing this season. The private landowner that was restricting access last year during the fishing season will allow public access this season. This will provide a location for a SaniCan to be temporarily placed for public use.

**Island Unit:** Field and drainage conditions have improved on the Island. Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tec Cosgrove will disk areas too wet early in the season. They will also disk and cultipack portions of the fields to improve walking access. It is too late to plant crops this season, so the objective is to allow millet and smartweed growth, but to set back reed canary grass and cattail in wetter field edges. This should also improve field access for waterfowl.

**Pheasant Release Program:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tec Cosgrove purchased and began assembly of materials for foot bridge crossing and sign board for the new DNR pheasant release site. Site preparations will begin next week.

**Crescent Lake Unit Trail Project:** Manager Paulson mowed walking trails through the big leaf maple forest on the Crescent Lake Unit. These trails will be signed, mapped, and maintained throughout the year.

**Lake Terrell Pheasant Pen Improvements:** Manager Kessler cleaned and prepped the pheasant feeders and ordered a pallet of feed for the pheasant season. He also started contacting volunteers and informed them of the upcoming pre-season release scheduling meeting.

**Lake Terrell Blind Brushing Party:** The Whatcom County chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association spent Sunday morning repairing and brushing up many of the hunting blinds at Lake Terrell in preparation for the upcoming waterfowl season.

### Access Areas

**Skagit River Boat Ramps:** Three new boat ramps on the Skagit River, known as Faber Ferry North, west of Rockport, Birdsview Access, east of Concrete, and Hamilton access were completed this week. The project was completed under budget, which originally was estimated to construct two of the three ramps with the available funding. The Upper Skagit Tribe was prepared to provide funding for construction of the Hamilton Ramp if necessary. This project was a result of a multi-agency cooperative effort led by Region 4 Lands Agent Kye Iris involving WDFW, Skagit County Parks, and the Upper Skagit Tribe. The funding for this project originated from mitigation from the Baker Re-licensing Agreement, administered through U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. This project is the result of ongoing efforts originating in 2009. Directions to the sites are available at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/water\\_access/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/water_access/)



*View of one of three new boat ramps recently installed on the Skagit River.*

### ***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Samish Unit:** Manager Rotton is working with a local Eagle Scout to install a waterfowl hunting blind on the site for his project.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Noxious Weed Control:** Manager Paulson toured the Stillwater and Cherry Valley Units with a King County Noxious Weed Control representative. They mapped teasel and tansy ragwort at the Stillwater Unit. They also pulled and bagged purple loosestrife on the Stillwater and Cherry Valley Units. Manager Paulson met with WDFW weed crew at the north end of the Ebey Island Unit. Japanese knotweed was growing along the dike and along Homeacres Road. The weed crew sprayed the weeds and planned further management.

### ***GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Provide Program Radio Training:** Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio training and wildlife radio call numbers to staff in preparation for their use of state radios.

**Wildlife Program-Private Lands Program Coordination:** Biologists Danilson and Roozen met with Wildlife Program Manager Link to discuss a variety of personnel, workload, and coordination issues. A number of important issues were identified and several were resolved prior to heading in to the fall hunting season, which is the busiest time of year in District 14 and with the Private Lands Program.

## **REGION 5**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Townsend's Big-Eared Bats:** Biologist Anderson conducted a follow-up site visit to one of our most important Townsend's big-eared bat caves near the Trout Lake area. This cave is used year round as both a maternity and hibernation site and was gated in 1996 for its protection from human disturbance. Biologist Anderson cleared fallen limbs and brush near the cave entrance to provide better access for additional surveys. The gate was constructed by The Nature Conservancy, WDFW, and the USFS with funding from one of the early WDFW ALEA grants. It's encouraging that 16 years later the gate is still in good shape and providing protection for this bat colony.



*Townsend's big-eared bat caves near the Trout Lake area.*

**Western gray squirrel population augmentation:** Biologist George assisted with the initial setup for trapping grids being laid out on the Klickitat Wildlife Area to capture western gray squirrels. Pre-baiting of the traps began this week and trapping is scheduled for several weeks following. Squirrels will be captured and translocated to augment an isolated population of gray squirrels in Region 6. Western gray squirrels were first listed in 1993 as threatened in the state of Washington and are currently a federal species of concern. Klickitat Wildlife Area is one of the last strong holds remaining in the state for this species.

**Mazama's pocket gopher surveys:** Biologists George and Bergh started the first wave of Mazama pocket gopher surveys this week. This multi-component study is being conducted with the intention of updating distribution descriptions and illustrating relative occurrence of gophers among broad habitat associations. The first surveys done in Region 5 all took place on public lands and did not result in any detection of Mazama pocket gophers. Additional plots will be surveyed in the coming weeks.

**Black-tailed deer research:** Another fawn was detected on mortality signal this week in the Coweeman study cluster. The fawn died sometime between the 9<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> of August and its radio collar was the only evidence found. The Coweeman study cluster only has two fawns remaining, which are twins, and the last fawns to be born this spring.

## Wildlife Areas

### **Cowlitz Wildlife Area**

**Peterman Hill Unit:** Wildlife Area staff have completed approximately 15 miles of roadside spraying on the Peterman Hill Unit. A non-selective herbicide was applied to control encroaching grasses and broadleaf species allowing for vehicle passage.

***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

**Wildlife Management**

**Mt. St. Helens mudflow hunting access:** Letters were sent out this week regarding access to the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area and the surrounding elk area 5099 during the upcoming hunting season. Special permit holders in the 5099 elk area do not have motorized access to the Wildlife Area unless they are disabled hunters with permits for hunts 2607 or 2608. Non-motorized access to the Wildlife Area is available and hunters are encouraged to check the Weyerhaeuser access hotline (1-866-636-6531) for details on access to the St. Helens Tree Farm.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Cowlitz Wildlife Area**

**Hunter Education:** Officer Sympson and Wildlife Area staff taught a two-day hunter education class at the Wildlife Area office with instruction on basic hunter safety, ethics, sportsmanship, and conservation. Those passing the written test moved onto the Morton gun club for a skills evaluation training course and live fire exercises. Thirteen students passed the course and received hunter safety cards needed to purchase their first hunting license.

***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Customer Service:** Biologist Anderson returned calls to several hunters inquiring about upcoming fall hunts. Hunters are primarily asking about archery elk in the south Cascades units. Two hunters specifically raised concerns about the number of cow elk permits being issued in the Siouxon and Lewis River units, suggesting that elk numbers and hunting opportunity have decreased in the last five years.

**REGION 6**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Mazama Pocket Gophers (MPG):** Biologists Hoenes and Michaelis conducted surveys in Capitol Forest in association with WDFW's effort to improve its understanding about Mazama pocket gopher distribution. All sightings were located in industrial timberland clear-cuts and no gopher mounds were detected.

Bio Schmidt continued survey efforts for the Mazama pocket gopher in Pierce and Thurston counties. Fourteen plot surveys were completed on private lands; all were negative for gopher presence. One day was spent creating maps and data forms for the upcoming week's surveys.

## **Bat Projects**

**Exit Count at Salt Creek Bunker** - On Thursday August 23, 2012, a bat exit count was conducted at one of several World War II bunkers located at Salt Creek County Park in Clallam County. This particular bunker has been known to host a colony of bats over the past several years. Survey efforts are part of an ongoing search to locate roost sites, maternity colonies, and hibernacula of Townsend Big Eared Bats, a state candidate species. Bat gates with horizontal metal bars have been installed across all openings (see photo below). There are three openings in the front, one in the back, and one on top of the bunker. This bunker contains several rooms inside. Surveyors included Biologists Ament and Loafman, as well as volunteer Biologists Patrick Loafman (Olympic National Park), Kari Williamson (U.S. Forest Service), and Ashley Green (formerly of Olympic National Park). The survey began at 8:28 pm and ended at 10:32 pm. The total number of bats counted was 322. This is the highest count that Bio Ament is aware of at the site. The highest count in the past was 200. At least two different sizes of bats were present.



***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

**Private Lands/Access**

**Industrial Timberlands:** Bio Harris continued to communicate with landowners on access. Barring any more fire closure access for archery hunters will be similar to last year with the exception of GMU's 658 and 673 that will have less motorized access. The lion's share of industrial timberlands is currently open to hunting.

**USFS Lands:** The U.S. Forest Service unexpectedly closed Forest Service Road 2170 in the Matheny GMU. Calls to them indicated that no one was quite sure why this closure occurred just prior to the hunting seasons. Bio Harris was told by USFS staff that several calls had already been received and that they would let him know of the status as soon as possible. This is a very popular road for accessing the GMU and will affect the archery and quality hunts if not opened.

***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Wildlife Viewing:** Biologist Sundstrom was flagged down by a group of seven birders from Port Angeles at Midway Beach on Friday. The group was in search of snowy plovers as well as other shorebirds. Sundstrom attempted to locate any snowy plover outside the posted area, but was unsuccessful. The group was disappointed, but appreciative of the effort. Biologist Sundstrom directed them to the 'pond' area at Midway Beach Road where they could view phalaropes, sandpipers, yellow legs, waterfowl, northern harriers, gull species, and miscellaneous passerines.