

Wildlife Program

Week of July 9-15, 2012

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Scientific Collections Permits: Comments on the revised Scientific/Education Permit Application and Application Instructions were submitted to Tricia Thompson who evaluated the comments and incorporated them into this next draft. We are getting close to launching these on the Scientific Permit Application website <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/scp/>. The next phase is to discuss the process for approving, denying, and conditioning these permits.

Wildlife Rehabilitation: Wildlife rehabilitation is a profession licensed by the State of Washington. Wildlife rehabilitators must go through 1000 hours of training, pass an exam, and either build or work at approved facilities in order to obtain their license. The rule governing wildlife rehabilitation in the state of Washington, WAC 232-12-275, is being overhauled to improve efficiency and consistency in implementing these rules, making it easier for Washington wildlife rehabilitators to practice rehabilitation and for WDFW staff to manage this activity. Washington rule change requires that the revision go through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process and be reviewed by the public. A draft of the SEPA checklist was completed this week. Wildlife rehabilitators will have a chance to review the proposed WAC changes.

Wildlife rehabilitators have the potential of being routinely exposed to zoonotics (diseases communicable between animals and humans). Every piece of information they can get on avoiding these diseases is critical. A laboratory report of a Washington beaver testing positive for tularemia was sent to all Washington wildlife rehabilitators this past week.

Falconry: Tricia Thompson permitted two new falconers and sent out their falconry licenses, and approved three falconry applications and mailed approval letters to the applicants.

One never knows what one is going to find on their 29th floor hotel balcony. Photographs of this golden eagle were sent to Ericka Thomas, WDFW Region 4 Customer Service Specialist. The eagle had falconry jesses on, but was later discovered to be missing from its education position at Woodland Park Zoo, to which it was returned.



Discussions regarding raptor rehabilitation have reopened between the WDFW Falconry Manager Tricia Thompson and select Washington falconers.

The WDFW often gets calls reporting injured raptors but have few places to take or send them. These falconers have the expertise and knowledge to provide this service when it is needed. There are areas in Washington where wildlife rehabilitation is underserved and raptors in

particular are often in need of care. After passing an exam exclusive to raptors, these falconers would have the specialized raptor permit only and would not be allowed to provide rehabilitation for any other species. The Falconry Raptor Rehabilitation Exam is being created for this use.

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

Wildlife Outreach, Science and Lands conduct first EIM Training: WDFW's wildlife program launched an Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) project on July 11, 2012, realizing a vision to engage the public through Citizen Science to share the responsibility for sustaining fish and wildlife resources. Ten volunteers from all walks of life, including a physician, engineer, health professional, retired teachers, and master hunters attended a day-long workshop at the 21,000 acre public wildlife area in Lincoln County.



Dr. Michael Schroeder instructs volunteers on photo monitoring techniques.

Lands Manager Juli Anderson welcomed and encouraged the citizen science volunteers to assist monitoring the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. WDFW Wildlife Scientists Dr. Matt Vander Haegen and Dr. Michael Schroeder provided training on protocols for the volunteers to monitor the local wildlife area landscape. In spite of the 90 degree heat, the citizen science volunteers followed the scientists into sage country to find photo point locations with their GPS units, to practice taking images in specific directions that will capture the near and far landscape, and to

learn how to collect simple habitat data that will allow scientists to track the condition of important wildlife habitats.



Dr. Matt Vander Hagen describes GPS mapping technology.

Andy Duff, the project's IT lead demonstrated through WDFW's online website how to preplan monitoring location visits and where to upload their photo point images and habitat reports. Volunteer coordinator James Chandler explained how volunteer's hours are recorded online counting towards earning a Discover Pass good for one year. Citizen science leads, Chuck Gibilisco and Margaret Tudor, facilitated the workshop, supplying GPS and transect tools, guidebooks, refreshments and lunch to the volunteers who were completely immersed in learning.



Dr. Margaret Tudor instructs citizen scientists on data gathering protocols.

At the wrap up of the workshop, the volunteers offered that they will be reporting their data online to WDFW over the next few months. Some of our volunteers are anxious to expand their citizen science monitoring to other wildlife areas. Others have offered to coordinate in Western Washington Wildlife Areas. Our citizen science participants unanimously agreed that this project has great potential to grow.

Everyone involved in the initial EIM July 11, training and workshop deserves a pat on the back for a job well done, and the comments from our very talented and diverse group of participants also supports that fact. All WDFW efforts and elements from webpage online development, GIS map products, Outreach workshop product production, organization, set-up and facilitation, a gracious and enthusiastic WA Manager and staff to host and assist with set-up and break-down.

Grizzly Bear Outreach Program (BBOP): Mike O'Malley, Wildlife Outreach and Dave Ware, Game Division, met with the former and new Executive Director of GBOP to outline mutual projects on carnivore (cougar, wolf, bear) education activities.

REGION 1

WOLF MANAGEMENT DISTRICT 1

Northeast Washington Wolf Depredation: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd was informed at the Director's meeting at the Spokane Regional Office of a cattle depredation

incident near Laurier, WA. Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd and Officer Weatherman proceeded to the Diamond M Ranch property and met with the Officers Anderson and Sergeant Charron, and rancher Bill McIrven of the Diamond M. There was a Hereford cow in a corral with a bite mark on its snout and a calf had a large gaping wound on a rear flank or hindquarter, a large bite mark on an outer front shoulder, bite wounds on the neck, and severe groin trauma from bite wounds.



Calf with large gaping wound on a rear flank at Diamond M Ranch property. There was a Hereford cow in a corral with a bite mark on its snout.

Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd accompanied Officer Anderson to another cattle depredation incident near Laurier, WA at the Diamond M Ranch USFS Churchill allotment. Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd and Officer Anderson subsequently met Biologist Frame, Officer Weatherman and Sergeant Charron, Bill and Len McIrven of the Diamond M, and Stevens County Sheriff Allen and his employees.

There was a Hereford calf carcass which appeared to have been dead for several days, possibly over a week. Biologist Frame had observed scrapes and a confined carcass. Only soft tissue had been consumed and no large bones had been scattered. All observers including Bill and Len McIrven concluded this was cougar kill.



Cougar killed calf near Laurier, WA.

Another calf carcass was present of a partially consumed calf carcass that was fresher than the cougar killed carcass just observed downhill $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. The days since death seemed to be consistent with the time since injury of a calf transported to the Diamond M on 7/11/12 (3-5 days old). Much hair and large leg bones were strewn about and a black spot where the carcass originally had been was evident. Numerous adult wolf tracks were observed in the area (Photo below). What was left of this carcass and the dispersed hair, including spread about large leg bones, some apparent underarm and groin damage to the remaining hide, and the presence of fresh wolf tracks and wolf scat details a pattern consistent with canine attack, presence of multiple wolves, and a wolf-killed animal.



Adult wolf track near calf carcass near Laurier WA.

Other Northeast Washington Wolf Management Activities: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd discussed the Smackout Pack, the Range Rider Project, general wolf-cattle issues with ranchers Jeff and John Dawson.

Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker checked remote cameras in the South Huckleberry Mountains where the Huckleberry wolf pack was discovered. The card was retrieved but was not checked due to a long day.

Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf locations and pack discovery with contractor Jeff Flood and also Joel Anderson, Conservation Northwest remote camera volunteer.

DISTRICT 2

Livestock Depredation Investigation: Biologists Ferguson and Atamian along with Wildlife Officer Paul Mosman investigated a livestock depredation report just south of Mt Spokane. Incident involved 3 horses – 1 that had to be taken to a vet, another with slight injuries and the other mainly escaped injury. Investigation and discussion will continue on this week.

DISTRICT 3

Gray Wolf: District Biologist Paul Wik, Wildlife Officer John, and a student officer spent 2 days backpacking in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness looking for wolf sign. The only wolf sign observed was a single pile of scat that appeared to be fairly old. Due to warmer temperatures, wildlife was only observed during the crepuscular time periods.

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

Wildlife Areas

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area- Ebson Fire #2: Bio Woodall investigated the report of a small fire the previous night at the Ebson Fishing Access Site on the Grande Ronde River. It is directly next to the same location of a fire from the previous week.

A neighboring private landowner was the first responder and doused the flames with water from his ATV mounted tank. He said a loose power line that was whipping in the wind was arching and throwing sparks and the wind blew the sparks down into the dry vegetation. It is now suspected that this arching also caused last week's fire as well. He called Clearwater Power and they came out last night to make adjustments and fix the problem.

A follow-up call to power company was made and confirmed that they did in fact make a service call to that location and made some repairs. The area that burned was approximately .15 acres and was contained by the county road and the previous burn. No WDFW structures were damaged in this fire.



Second Ebson access site fire on left.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Areas

Director's meeting and Region 1 Awards Ceremony:

Region 1 Wildlife Program Staff attended this full-day meeting on Wednesday. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Finch was surprised to receive the regional "Employee of the Year" award during the morning session.

In addition, Wildlife Biologist Jay Shepherd received the Regional Director's award for his work on wolves, Eastside Lands Supervisor Brian Trickel received the Conservation Award for his work on land acquisitions in Southeast Washington, and Regional Program Manager Kevin Robinette received the Manager of the Year Award. Staff also attended the Wildlife Program break-out in the afternoon, and gave a summary of current activities at the NE Washington WLA Complex.



REGION 2

DISTRICT BIOLOGISTS

District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Vacant

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Western grebe: Biologists Finger and Becker made a 4th weekly visit to monitor the Western grebe colony at Job Corps dike. Water levels dropped 14” over 5 days. Total estimated number of nests since last week has decreased by 41% (Week 1; $n=196$, Week 2; $n=247$, Week 3; $n=201$, Week 4; $n=119$). Of 69 individual nests monitored to date; 1) 29 (42%) were active, 2) 15 (22%) hatched, and 3) 25 (36%) appear to have failed. Of the failures, 16% appear to be from declining water levels, 8% from adult mortality, 20% from nest destruction (likely from wind and carp activity), 8% from egg depredation, 12% from abandonment, and the remainder was unknown.



June 20th



June 27th



July 5th



July 10th

District 6: Okanogan District - Scott Fitkin / Jeff Heinlen

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Grizzly Bear Surveys: Biologist Fitkin completed the midway check of grizzly bear hair-snag sites deployed in the Eastern Pasayten Wilderness. We collected four hair samples from one of the three sites. All samples appeared to be black bear hair; however the final determination will be made by DNA analysis later in the year. The objective of this project is to collect data on grizzly status/distribution in the North Cascades Ecosystem. Results could influence distinct population segment status and potential future recovery efforts.



East Pasayten high country (left). Probable black bear hair (right).

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

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

SAFE: Biologists Volsen and Gallie completed breeding bird surveys in 40 State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) enrolled fields in Douglas County. A total of 67 enrolled fields were identified as having the adequate configuration and internal volume to serve as a sampling site. Surveys in 2012 were conducted as pre-treatment surveys in old CPR fields. Over the summer Region 2 Lands staff will complete field layout planning, with treatments being applied in September. Fields will be resurveyed in years 5, 10 and 15 of the contracts.

Wildlife Areas

Wells Wildlife Area Complex – Dan Peterson / Ann Winters / Fidel Rios

Weather Conditions: It was a bit warm this week...

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

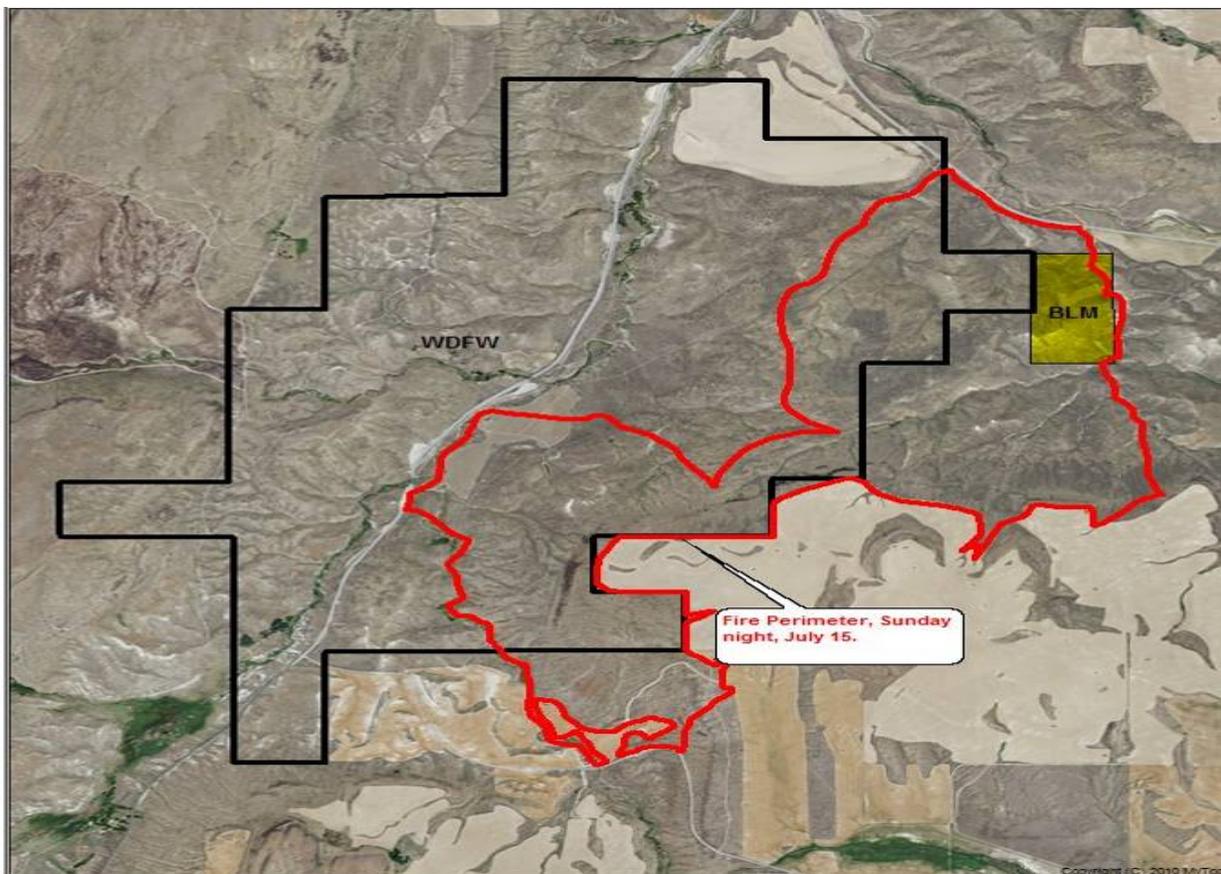
Foster Creek Fire – Bridgeport Unit: Late Thursday night a line of thunderstorms moved across northern Douglas County igniting multiple small fires including one in the northeast corner of the Bridgeport Unit. This was one of three fires the local fire district was responding to and by the early morning hours of Friday they had it knocked down and contained it to less than 50 acres of WDFW and private land.



In the mid-morning, however, with temperatures above 90 degrees and humidity levels in the low teens, the fire managed to reignite in two locations and with the help of northerly winds was soon out of control. Friday afternoon winds shifted to the east-northeast and pushed the fire across grader lines on the southeast boundary of the wildlife area. By 10pm Friday the fire was essentially contained and had burned as far as the Bridgeport Hill Road.

Saturday fire crews were busy putting out hot spots near the fire lines, and tying dozer lines together. Sunday afternoon, July 15, thunderstorms producing high winds from the north kicked the fire up again and it jumped containment lines on the south end of the wildlife area. By Sunday night the fire had crossed back into private land and threatened to burn standing winter wheat. As of late Sunday, an estimated 725 acres of WDFW land burned, much of which was sagebrush that was in excess of 30% cover.

The total acreage for the Foster Creek Fire is approximately 1,350 including private lands, BLM and WDFW. Units responding included Douglas County Fire Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, Douglas-Okanogan 15, Chelan County Districts, 2, 7, 8, DNR, BLM, US Forest Service, three contract dozers and contract crews from Yakima and Oregon. At this time known WDFW losses include: four solar panels and their controller, an estimated 2,500 feet of plastic irrigation pipe and fittings, 1,000 feet of deer fence, and 4.25 miles of boundary fence.



Foster Creek Fire, July 13-15 2012.



Foster Creek Fire, July 13-15 2012.



Foster Creek Fire, July 13 -15 2012.

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

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

Banks Lake Fire: Manager Fitzgerald received a phone call Tuesday from Private Lands Biologist Braaten reporting a fire in the northern part of the Banks Lake Unit. Local Fire Protection Districts and the US Bureau of Reclamation Fire Department out of Grand Coulee had already responded and began fire fighting activities. When Fitzgerald arrived on-scene, the fire was actively burning shrub/steppe vegetation in a box canyon on the west side of Banks Lake, with a helicopter making water drops in an effort to prevent the fire from spreading over the canyon wall and endangering high-voltage power lines above the canyon rim. Accessibility to the fire was limited to ATV's from the ground, but the Bureau of Land Management responded with a 20-man hand crew, which they were able to transport to the fire in boats. As the sun set Tuesday, with rising relative humidity and no wind, the fire laid right down. The fire was most likely started by a lightning strike from a passing thunderstorm Monday night.



Banks Lake 7/10/12.

PRIVATE LANDS - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten and PL Biologist Baarstad completed SAFE field surveys this week and visited several fields getting prepared for this fall's SAFE seedings.

Biologist Wisniewski worked on writing SAFE plans and updating CPA6 forms (Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) conservation notes, used to update progress or changes to SAFE contracts). Biologist Wisniewski compiled data on SAFE activities for the 2nd quarter of 2012 and provided Don Larsen with a report.

HABITAT DEVELOPMENT: Private Lands Biologist Braaten visited several habitat projects, to see how much maintenance will be required this summer. Private Lands Biologist Braaten also looked at forb strips he planted into CRP to increase insects for Sharp-tailed and Sage Grouse.





Middle Crab Creek Habitat Enhancement Project: Natural Resource Workers Osborne and Steele have worked with Columbia Basin Wildlife Area staff to disc fire breaks, mow and spray herbicides to prepare six sites totaling approximately 180 acres for seeding to native grasses in 2014. The middle crab creek habitat enhancement project is composed of various tasks primarily aimed at establishing appropriate native vegetation prior to, or shortly after, “feed” water (*Feed water will consist of a 150cfs annual release with a spring “pulse” of 500cfs which will take place from April 1 – June 30*) to reduce the potential spread of non-native invasive plants. Doing so will result in, 1) improved nesting habitat for game birds (upland and waterfowl), 2) improved fawning cover for mule deer, 3) increased winter food and thermal cover for upland game birds, and 4) increased browse and cover for mule deer. Additional benefits include, shrub habitat for neo-tropical migrant birds, native forbs for insects and wildlife forage (particularly upland game bird brooding), and reduced erosion from riparian stabilization. These tasks are expected to improve consumptive and non-consumptive recreational value within the Gloyd Seeps portion of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area.



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

WILDFIRE: On Tuesday a lightning fire broke out on the Banks Lake Unit of the Columbia Wildlife Area. The fire was east of Barker Canyon in shrub-steppe pasture. The fire grew to about 200 acres before local fire districts, federal and state agencies help put it out on Wednesday. The fire was in steep rocky terrain. Private Lands Biologist assisted by calling leasee Bill McLean whose cattle were in pasture of the fire, contacting campers at Barker Canyon Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) access and also assisted Douglas County District 3 Fire chief with



location of fire on quad maps. Private Lands Biologist Braaten also informed firefighters of hazards from the Barker Canyon access point. The fire fighters also borrowed WDFW's four wheeler to recon fire location to command and to transport food and water to fire fighters on the wildlife area. Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with Manager Greg Fitzgerald to report status of fire later Tuesday. Douglas County, Grand Coulee, Electric City, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) firefighters did an amazing job getting fire under control.

Landowners of the Year Award: Leroy and Betty Sanderson were in attendance to receive award for their conservation and habitat development efforts for Sharp-tailed Grouse in Douglas County.



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Rock Creek Sheep: District Wildlife Biologist Jeff Bernatowicz coordinated a bighorn sheep capture operation in the Rock Creek area. We were finally able to get GPS collars on 1 young ram and 2 ewes. These collars will provide important information of bighorn use of the area for input into the Payette risk assessment model. The USFS has already asked for data from next week's download. The capture effort took significant effort (over 20 people) as we were prepared to use either the net gun or a drive net if needed. Northwest helicopter was able to complete the capture via net gun. Personnel from the Yakama Nation, Muckleshoot tribe, Oak Creek and Colockum Wildlife Areas participated along with volunteers from Safari Club International and the Wild Sheep Foundation. Completing the capture would have been very difficult without all the help.

Wildlife Areas

Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan: Wildlife Area Mangers Pete Lopushinsky, Shana Winegeart and Cindi Confer Morris, Habitat Biologist Mark Teske and Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Will Moore participated on a field trip on Saturday for the DNR/DFW "Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan." The entire day was spent touring the area, making several stops to discuss shrub-steppe habitat, elk winter range, elk summer range, green dot road management, dispersed camping, stream-adjacent roads, shooting ranges, etc.



DNR/DFW Recreation Plan Field Trip.

Brushy Creek/Tekison Creek Fire: A fire started by lightning Thursday night in the Brushy Creek/Tekison Creek area. Wildlife Area Manager Pete Lopushinsky coordinated with Central WA Interagency Command Center (CWICC) to dispatch 2 DNR helitac crews for initial attack Friday morning.

Eventually we had three helicopters, one airplane and two engines fighting this fire. Extremely poor road access to this remote area delayed ground crews from reaching the site until 11:00 am. One engine and one dozer broke down while trying to reach the site. Gusty winds and temperatures near 100 degrees made this a difficult fire to control. The fire was contained by Friday evening and one engine crew stayed the night to watch for hotspots, leaving Saturday morning. The fire was at about 250 acres as of Friday night.



DNR Crew on the Colockum Wildlife Area Brushy Creek/Tekison Creek Fire.

Umtanum #2 Fire: DNR got the fire contained Monday, July 9. After putting in dozer line, they were able to put ground crews in the riparian area and get most of that area mopped up. Final acreage after flying the perimeter ended up at 132 acres, quite a bit smaller than the estimates.



Umtanum #2 Fir –Riparian area burning with adjacent dozer line.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Common Loon Survey: Biologist DeBruyn visited a loon nesting site at Hozomeen Lake and documented breeding success (one fully feathered young). DeBruyn also discovered an apparent family group of two young loons and an adult on Ross Lake.



Two young Common loons on Ross Lake.

Common Loon Sighting Follow-up: Biologist Cyra followed up on an earlier visit following a report of a pair of Common loons on Spada Lake, a reservoir operated by Snohomish County PUD for hydropower and the City of Everett for drinking water, in the foothills above the town of Sultan. On an earlier visit a single bird was observed for over an hour and half feeding in both shoreline and open water areas. As much of the lake is not visible from this observation point a follow-up survey was performed by boat. Again a single loon was observed for an extended period of time indicating that breeding did not take place this season. Future surveys earlier in the season next year may be performed to better determine status.

Peregrine Falcon Federal Delisting Monitoring: Biologist Cyra completed data analysis and submitted the required survey forms to Olympia. This third of four every-three year survey is to monitor Peregrine Falcons nationally following delisting from the Endangered Species List. District 13 has three sites to monitor, all accessible by boat. This season two sites were successful with two, and three young fledged. One site was not occupied and occurs in poor Peregrine nesting habitat.

Biologist Anderson surveyed Mt. Si and Rattlesnake Ledge for final Peregrine Occupancy. Three juveniles (corresponding with observations of three nestlings) were observed on the wing and utilizing the nest ledge at Rattlesnake. Food begging was heard twice at Mt. Si, with two individuals seen. Their behavior appeared to be adult, but they were far enough off that both Anderson and a falcon monitoring volunteer could not see any definitive field marks. It appears

Mt. Si, based on observations by Anderson, volunteers of adults and more recently a juvenile on wing, was active this year. More information regarding Peregrine management in WA can be found here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00387>

Pelagic Cormorant Nesting Colony Surveys: Biologist Cyra appended the data from this spring's surveys for Pelagic Cormorant colonies in the northern Puget Sound incorporating data obtained by USFWS refuge staff during their annual survey of refuge lands in the San Juan Islands. An analysis of the surveys and brief report of the work will be completed later in the summer.

Bat Roost Survey and News: In June a large colony of bats was documented roosting in a portion of one of Snohomish County's bridges. This week, District Biologist Milner and Wildlife Biologist Greg Green used a sonic bat detector to determine the species of bats in the roost. They identified the site as a maternity colony for California myotis and little brown bats.

Milner also received photographs from Russel Barsh of Qwiat that confirm the presence of a Townsend's big-eared bat in the San Juan Islands.

Wildlife Areas

Waterwheel Creek and Fish Passage Projects: Manager Paulson had an onsite meeting at the Cherry Valley Unit with the Waterwheel Creek and the Fish Passage Projects foreman, engineers and project managers. There were two reasons for the meeting, access management and water level awareness. The water level was shown by driving the Fish Passage group around their site with the Weed Crews Marsh Master. This tracked vehicle that can float transported the group into areas that 4 wheel vehicles could not. The tour was a success and the construction crews left confident that they could get the job done in time.

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

Wildlife Management

Band-Tailed Pigeon Surveys: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn attempted to survey the three mineral spring Band-tailed Pigeon sites in the district but weather issues (fog, thunderstorms) forced them to abort two surveys and allowed for only one to be completed.



Band-tailed Pigeons at a mineral spring. Note the two young birds on the far right.

Citizen Science Shorebird Projects: District Biologist Milner met with Gary Slater from Ecostudies Institute to plan shorebird surveys involving volunteer surveyors in 2012 & 2013, and to develop ideas for the 2013 Stanwood Snow Goose Festival. Milner and Slater met with the festival planning committee to discuss the possibilities for hosting the celebration of the successful designation of Skagit and Port Susan Bays as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site.

Private Lands Access

Whidbey Island Deer Hunting: Biologist Roozen continued discussions with Whidbey Island residents regarding their participation in program designed to allow limited access to private land for deer hunting. Roozen and technician Otto met with Whidbey Island landowners to discuss WDFW managed private lands access. Additionally, Roozen and Otto toured other potential access locations and began evaluating their quality.

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit: River conditions continue to hamper field preparations Natural Resources Tech Cosgrove checked and photographed field conditions on Thursday. Field flooding is widespread and drainage ditches are nearly out of banks in some locations.



Wet conditions on the Island Unit of Skagit Wildlife Area are hindering farming operations.

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

Wildlife Management

Region 4 WDFW staff worked both the Mill Creek Festival and the Edmonds in Bloom Festival this weekend.



WDFW staff worked the Mill Creek Festival.

Private Lands Access

GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access: Biologist Roozen continued preparations for upcoming elk hunting season. Roozen contacted the large landowner within GMU 418 about their continued participation and cooperation in public access to their property for elk hunting. Roozen continued discussions with WDFW Enforcement staff about their needs for and presence in the process. Biologist Danilson drafted and sent letter to GMU 418 elk permit holders informing them of meeting designed to facilitate access to much of the GMU.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Food Plots: Technician Otto continued work on food plots located on Waterfowl Quality Hunt locations in Whatcom County. One landowner has agreed to plant a food plot on his ground to improve hunting, and Otto is assisting in the planting. Otto also prepared ground for a test food plot located on another Waterfowl Quality Hunt location. The landowner has agreed to allow private lands staff to plant grain on a small section of ground.

Pheasant Release Site: Biologist Roozen continued discussions with WA Department of Natural Resources Staff regarding potential access to Bow Hill Rd location. Roozen also evaluated potential parking locations adequate for pheasant hunting access. Roozen and Otto also met with a Whidbey Island grower and release site partner to discuss cover and habitat on their enrolled ground.

Wildlife Areas

Wiley Slough Work group: Manager Belinda Rotton, Habitat Biologist Brian Williams and Stan Nelson, Dike District #22 Chairman met with the owner of the farm next to the Wiley Slough Restoration project and the farmer leasing the property. The purpose of the meeting was to provide them with an update of the progress the Wiley work group has made towards improving drainage. The items discussed included the proposed projects on the list for this summer: construction of a berm on the retention pond, construction of a new pump house and the dredging of portions of the Wiley Slough channel.

Headquarters: Manager Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist Meis prepared a new agricultural lease with the SJV Farms for the small acreage associated with the Moberg Road property near the Skagit Headquarters. This parcel had been part of a "Feel Free to Hunt" agreement with the previous land owner but when the property sold it was no longer under any agreement.

Preparation for the Pheasant Release Program: Skagit Wildlife Area and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area staff worked with Master Hunter volunteers to clean the pheasant pens and make improvement to the capture shed. The improvements that were made should facilitate the capture and handling process. The volunteers also cleaned the crates and the crating area with a pressure washer.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Pacific Flyway Meeting: Biologist Danilson attended the first three days of the Pacific Flyway Meeting in Spokane. In addition to learning more about the protocols and norms of these meetings, which culminate in the harvest framework for the Pacific Flyway states, Danilson was also able to meet with other WDFW personnel on upcoming projects (e.g. snow goose) and make valuable contacts with biologists from other states and Canada.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Site Surveys: Biologists Holman and George conducted band-tailed pigeon mineral site surveys at the Cedar Creek and Kalama River sites respectively. Pigeon abundance data at sites throughout western Washington are compiled with results from Oregon, California, and British Columbia by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a population trend and establish appropriate hunting seasons. Results at Cedar Creek and Kalama were similar to those of past years.

Western Pond Turtle Data Population Estimation: Biologists George and Holman continued work to compile four years worth of capture data for western pond turtles at the Sondino site. This task involves reviewing archived data sheets and entering capture information for hundreds of individual turtles and thousands of "trap days". Once the data is compiled, it will be submitted to Research Division for development of population estimation for this, the State's most robust pond turtle site.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Fawn mortality searches associated with the Region 5 black-tailed deer research project continued during the first week of July. Twelve study does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal and Coweeman Game Management Units. In the Coweeman cluster of 7 does, 9 fawns have been captured and 3 remain alive. Fawns 194COM and 202COM were on mortality signal during this week's checks. Unfortunately, both have very weak signals heard only in one or two spots and their locations could not be found this week.

Sandhill Cranes: Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit with DNR to one of their sites on the Klickitat River that supports a breeding pair of sandhill cranes. A pair of cranes was verified earlier in the spring (with two young) and those birds were again seen this week. In addition, biologist Anderson provided DNR with recommendations for habitat improvement in select wet meadows associated with their ownership.

Also this week, USFS personnel reported two sandhill cranes east of Trout Lake on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Biologist Anderson did a follow-up survey to attempt to locate this pair but they were not located. The habitat looked excellent and another survey will be conducted next week.

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area:

Vegetation Management: On Saturday Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald helped conduct a survey for Mouse-ear hawkweed on the St. Helens Wildlife Area, which was coordinated by the U.S. Forest Service and Cowlitz County Weed Management. Members of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteered for the survey along with volunteers with the Forest Service. A total of 80-90 sites were found on the Wildlife Area and the Mt. St. Helens Monument. Cowlitz County Weed Management and wildlife area staff will return to the wildlife area this week to treat the hawkweed.

Scotch Broom Removal: Technician Pyzik wrapped up this year's scotch broom work on the Mudflow Unit with the clearing of 3 acres of dead scotch broom.



Also, with the help of volunteer Braaten, Technician Pyzik was able to remove a few old culverts that were on the Mudflow.



Shillapoo Wildlife Area:

Vegetation Management: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald began pasture mowing this past week at Shillapoo, mowing about 50 acres total in the three units to control unwanted vegetation and to reduce fire danger along public roadways. He also treated Purple loosestrife in the North Unit finding higher than expected numbers of the plant in bloom. Although there were higher than expected numbers, it was also the latest date that Hauswald had ever conducted the first treatment of the year on the Wildlife Area since he began keeping records six years ago. Purple loosestrife treatments will continue throughout the summer on a 10-14 day interval, until the end of September.

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

Hunting Season: Biologist Anderson received several calls from hunters interested in information regarding the upcoming hunting season. People were inquiring about the disabled hunting program and deer season prospects.