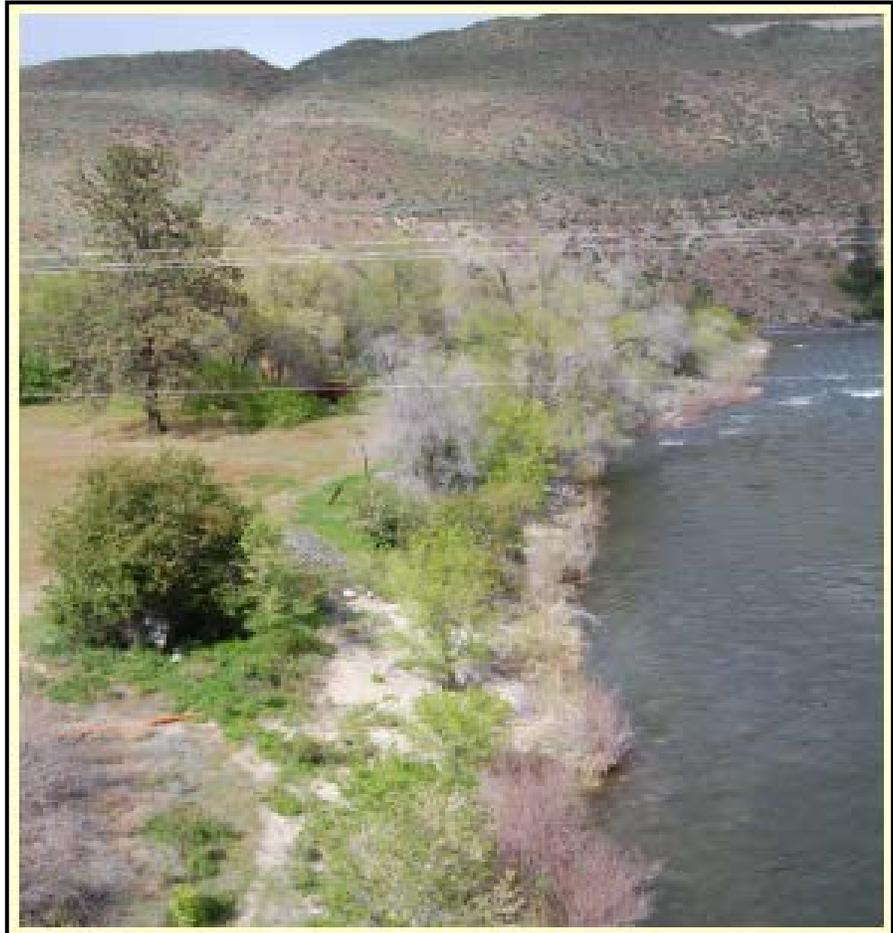


Wildlife Program

Week of October 22-28, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

Methow River Access: WDFW has completed the purchase of 6.3 acres on the Methow River, in Okanogan County for a public fishing access site. This property is located in the Methow Valley adjacent to Highway 153, approximately four miles west of the town of Pateros. The property will be developed to provide a much needed fishing access on a very popular stretch of the Methow River. This purchase was funded with mitigation money under the Grant County Public Utility District and funds from the Jobs Now Act. The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program as a public fishing access site.



WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Heron Working Group Meeting — Biologist Azerrad helped organize and lead this year's annual meeting of the heron working group. The working group is an international consortium of individuals from universities, government, and non-government organizations (NGOs) interested in the conservation of the Pacific Great Blue Heron. The meeting was held at two locations (Vancouver, British Columbia and Olympia) connected by WebEx. Presentations focused on ways of using citizen scientists to survey colonies, status reports on colonies in Washington and British Columbia, new ways of sharing heron data online, and the recently published Priority

Habitat and Species (PHS) heron guidelines. Also participating from the wildlife program were Bruce Thompson, Michelle Tirhi, and Chris Anderson.

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Rehabilitation: After some discussion, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Washington Administrative Code (WAC) revision review date has been pushed back a month. Last week's meeting resulted in some new issues being added to the WAC and these must be vetted carefully. Some of these issues relate to the necessity of Wildlife Rehabilitators applying for Scientific Collection Permits, along with Wildlife Rehabilitators need for education and surrogate animals.

The Wildlife Rehabilitators Grant will open November 1. Thompson is in the process of creating a more detailed database and is organizing electronic files to make the review and management of the grant more efficient. She is also searching for and contacting potential new outside (of WDFW) grant reviewers. The Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant is initially reviewed by a WDFW internal committee and then by outside reviewers.

Education: Thompson reviewed the edits by WDFW Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield for the Wildlife Diseases fact sheets written for the WDFW Conservation-Wildlife Health webpage. Thompson incorporated these comments and sent them off for another review. She is also working on collecting photographs for these web fact sheets. Some of these fact sheets are particularly important as they inform the public about zoonotic diseases (diseases passed from wildlife to humans).

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

Crossing Paths Newsletter - Thompson reviewed and commented on the November edition of a Crossing Paths article on winter hummingbird feeding and effects on winter migration of Anna's and rufous hummingbirds. Thompson found in the 1993-2001 WDFW Winter Backyard Bird Surveys that Anna's hummingbird winter numbers increased over the survey years, as did rufous hummingbird numbers, but to a much lesser degree as rufous hummingbirds arrived earlier in successive years.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area student project - Sunnyside Wildlife Area Manager Greg Bjornstrom implemented an administrative closure for a portion of the Sunnyside Wildlife Area for a planned school field trip. The trip is part of an eight-year running Sunnyside Ecosystem Study. Teachers, parents and students for the Chief Kiamakin Elementary School have been engaged in riparian fish and wildlife studies, and habitat restoration along a section of the Yakima River. A hunter classroom interaction brought new closure regulation into action for the 2012-2013 fieldtrips.



Fourth grade students from 2011 Chief Kamiakin Elementary School.

2012 Wildfire Impacts on Wildlife – A summary of the fires from this summer and fall was compiled, indicating size of the fire, impacts to WDFW lands and fences, and predicted impacts to wildlife (particularly deer, elk and bighorn sheep). A companion Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was written describing the impacts to wildlife, addressing the issue of supplemental feeding. Both are now available on the department website at [Wildfire Information | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#).

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1

Gray Wolf Management: Technician Baker and Biologist Shepherd responded to wolf sightings near Northport, Washington in which either multiple wolves were seen or where a single wolf was seen carrying off a chicken. Remote cameras were deployed. Technician Baker and Biologist Shepherd looked for wolf tracks in the wedge and visited the last alpha male location cluster. Technician Baker and Biologist Shepherd removed the last of the remote cameras in the north Kettle Range in wintery conditions. No wolves were detected. Technician Baker and Biologist Shepherd observed and watched a Smackout pack pup attempt to cross the paved road for an hour near Spirit Junction and attempted to haze it away from a ranch as several residents were concerned about the howling and proximity of wolves. Technician Baker and Biologist Shepherd replaced the battery on a Remotely Activated Guard unit on a ranch near Rocky Creek and discussed that option with another ranch operator in the area as well as a Livestock Damage Prevention Contract. Biologist Shepherd spent Saturday attempting to haze the Smackout pack on the Olson Ranch and discussing wolf issues and range riding with

ranchers Jeff and John Dawson. Biologist Shepherd de-scrambled, mapped, and texted Smackout wolf locations to range rider Leisa Hill everyday of the week. Technician Baker also completed restricted road entry permit paperwork for the Forest Service, followed up with Bushnell on trail camera repairs, and retrieved a trail camera from Flowery Trail. Biologist Shepherd completed and sent a draft Livestock Damage Prevention Contract to Wedge rancher Pete Guglimino.

District 2

Wolf Management: District Biologist (DB) Wik met with Officer John to discuss the recent cattlemen's meeting in Walla Walla that enforcement attended. Wik set up a meeting with the Asotin and Garfield County cattlemen's group to discuss wolf depredation response, investigation, and more for January. DB Wik talked with Wolf Biologist Frame about current issues. Wik checked the wolf sightings database and reported one sighting. Wik talked with Biologist Rasley about a number of landowners that might be good contacts for Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) Wolf Conflict contracts.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Moose and Bighorn Sheep Habitat Field Tour: Biologists Ferguson and Atamian gave a tour of the Spokane District's Moose areas to the new special species manager, Rich Harris, and discussed current and future management of both moose and bighorn sheep. We were able to look at the Mount Spokane and the Mica Peak area and also looked at a new area south of Spokane – the Tower Mountain area. Harris spent the next day in District One with Biologists Base and Shepherd and Program Manager Robinette. The day was spent on a driving tour of moose and bighorn sheep habitat within Game Management Units (GMUs) 113 and 117, as well as discussing issues and opportunities toward the effective management of these big game populations.

Private Lands/Access

Voluntary Public Access (VPA) Update: Supervisor McCanna compiled all the southeast Washington VPA access and habitat data. The private lands team in southeast Washington has signed up 53 new access and habitat contracts totaling over 53,000 acres, including over 3,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) diverse forb inter-seeding to benefit wildlife and sportsman.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Sightings on Northeast Washington Wildlife Areas: This week there have been 20 turkeys and two pheasants loitering in the yard at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (WLA)

headquarters. Three white-tailed bucks, a cow and calf moose, a few ruffed grouse, turkeys, and a bobcat were seen at West Branch Little Spokane WLA.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Boggan Access site maintenance: Wildlife Area staff used wildlife area equipment to trim trees and remove brush from the Boggan access site on the Grande Ronde River. Staff hauled a tractor, brush grapple attachment, work platform, and power saws to accomplish trimming wind damaged trees. Limbs and other debris were stacked nearby for bird and rabbit habitat.

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

Wildlife Areas

Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) training at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA): A second session of EIM training (one was held in July) was held at SLWA for Citizen Scientists to train them to collect basic habitat plot data and to take pictures at pre-set photo points. Turnout was excellent, with 25 attendees and 10 WDFW staff members involved with the training. WDFW proposes to use this methodology to monitor its Wildlife Areas.

REGION 2

District Biologists

District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Sara Gregory

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Washington Ground Squirrel: Biologists Finger and Gregory coordinated the preparation of squirrel enclosures in anticipation of their installation at the ground squirrel release site on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. Technicians Osborne and Steele helped modify 32 enclosures that have been used in previous translocations. The enclosures will allow for the soft-release of 80 pregnant females and 16 mature males in February 2013. Biologists Finger and Gregory also provided comments on a proposal from the University of Washington and The Nature Conservancy for a project that will model the comparative effects of habitat improvements for the Washington ground squirrel that seek to either expand the quality and number of specific habitat patches or improve connectivity by removing barriers to movement. Additionally, the project will model how the habitat enhancements for ground squirrels might benefit other shrub-steppe wildlife. Biologist Gregory participated in a conference call regarding the proposal.

Yuma skipper butterfly: Biologist Gregory attended a meeting at Sun Lakes state park with representatives from State Parks, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Bureau of Reclamation, and Department of Agriculture to discuss the skipper (*Ochlodes yuma*) and its host plant, *Phragmites australis*. Recent herbicide applications targeting the non-native *Phragmites*

genotype was unintentionally applied to native Phragmites populations at Sun Lakes. It is unknown what effects this may have on the skipper, a state candidate species. The meeting focused on techniques for distinguishing the native Phragmites from the non-native genotype, a Class B Noxious weed. Development of a park management plan for the native Phragmites population and the skipper, as well as monitoring for both species at Sun Lakes was also discussed. The meeting concluded with a tour of a native Phragmites stand adjacent to the Sun Lakes Park Campground.



A stand of native phragmites, host plant for the Yuma skipper, at Sun Lakes State Park.

Species Recovery

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery - Penny Becker / Chad Eidson

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Breeding Enclosures: Research Scientist Becker and Biologist Eidson worked with volunteers to plant sagebrush and grass seeds in the large enclosures on Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. In addition, repairs were made to the enclosures to prepare for winter.

Construction of Dormaier Breeding Enclosure: Biologist Eidson and graduate student DeMay began trenching the perimeter of the enclosure to be built next week with volunteers and staff.

Recovery Fund Pre-Proposal: Becker worked on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Fund pre-proposals for pygmy rabbits.

Wildlife Areas

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

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Foster Creek Fire Rehab: Fidel and Biologist Ann Winters completed mowing the acreage we've identified for drill seeding – approximately 100 acres.

West Foster Creek Headcut Repair Project: Area Manager Dan Peterson met with Tim Behne of Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD), Ryan Roberts who's an engineer with the Kittitas Conservation District, and Mark Amara an archeologist, at the project site to discuss design changes, placement of rock weirs and fencing. Mark was hired by the FCCD to complete the Culture Resource Review and spent much of the day making test holes at the weir locations and locations Dan identified for placement of fence posts. Funding for this project was secured by the FCCD.



Tim Behne (left) and archeologist Mark Amara discuss design changes at West Foster Creek.

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

Brewster High School Career Fair: On Wednesday evening, Ann, Fidel and Dan participated in a career fair at Brewster High School for middle and high school students. Their tables, laden with animal skins, telemetry equipment, guide books, a slide show and a variety of DFW

pamphlets generated quite of a lot of interest from students and parents alike. Not having any educational materials on hand, they prepared by borrowing, begging and not quite stealing materials from a number of people. Fidel was an invaluable presence as the school district is predominately Hispanic. Many thanks to those who helped with donated or loaned materials, including Jeff Heinlen and Mike Schroeder for the telemetry equipment, Madonna Luers for the table banner, Kathy Ballenger for the pamphlets, Larry Brewington for the laptop, George Brady of Cascade Biological Supply for the animal skins and skulls, and Dr. Bethany Marshall (Washington State University) for the 27 inch monitor and PowerPoint help.



Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Complex - Jim Olson / Brian DuPont / Mike Nelson

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

Similkameen – Chopaka Wildlife Area: Jim toured the new Similkameen – Chopaka wildlife area with three members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. The Director's Office organized a sweeping tour of Okanogan County projects, but due to the flu season, many had to drop out. However, we had a good day and they were impressed with the remoteness, beauty, and quiet of the Chopaka valley. They learned about operations, maintenance, and enhancement needs on a wildlife area, and we had a good discussion about equipment and long term Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funding. I think they genuinely appreciate what we do in the field and will be good supporters when dealing with BPA.

Chesaw Habitat Improvement: Bryan and Jim opened sealed bids for the Chesaw habitat improvement project. Two bids were received and Boise Cascade Wood Products in Kettle Falls Washington was the high bidder. Doug Kuehn is in the process of awarding the contract to Boise and thinning will start this winter when frozen ground and snow cover is present. The winter conditions will minimize ground disturbance. In addition we are requiring a cut-to-length processor and self-loading forwarder which also reduces skidding and potential ground disturbance.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug

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

Coordinated Weed Management Meeting in Okanogan – Assistant manager Haug met with Anna Lyon of the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board as well as representatives from the DNR, USFS, Okanogan County, WSDOT and BLM to discuss this year's noxious weed accomplishments for the Sinlahekin. The weed board seemed pleased with the progress this year and a representative will give the update to a larger audience at the end of November (all agency personnel will be at the Wildlife Program School in Wenatchee).

Coordination Meeting with Okanogan County Board of Commissioners – Manager Swedberg, Fuels Management Officer Leuschen and Dry Forest Restoration Specialist Guse met with Okanogan County Board of Commissioners to discuss improved coordination and communication regarding prescribed burn plans and bans. Due to miscommunication the previous week a prescribed burn window was missed after the Governor's burn ban, DNR burn ban and WDFW burn ban had all expired and a prescribed burn had been planned, but quashed after finding that there was a County Burn Ban in effect.

Discussions were initiated with the Okanogan County Commissioners regarding development of a program for exempting certain planned controlled burns from "burn bans"

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Private Lands - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

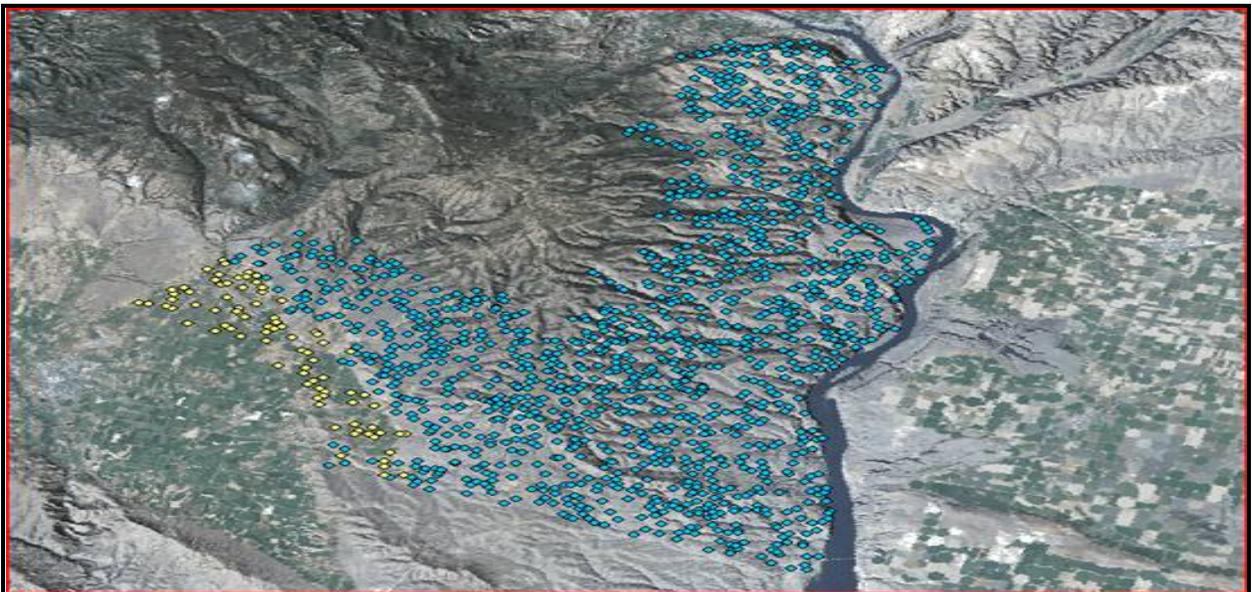
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Private Lands Biologists Braaten, Cotton and Wisniewski compiled data and sent report to NRCS for work completed Jul-Sep 2012. We completed vegetation surveys, created 25% leave area polygons, and met with landowners to discuss survey results and go over SAFE protocols for 18 tracts covering 3,878.41 acres. Wrote 61 SAFE plans and submitted all required forms to Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) covering 10,793.68 acres. We created forb polygons covering 1,555.79 acres that will be seeded to forbs this fall and flagged 25% leave areas on 9 tracts. Private Lands Biologist Braaten also spent several hours and phone calls answering seeding questions, dealing with final prep issues, etc. Several SAFE fields qualified for emergency grazing for landowners affected by Leahy Barker Wildfire. Private Lands Bios Cotton and Wisniewski spent most of the week flagging forb polygons and meeting with landowners to check final preparations for fall seeding.

REGION 3

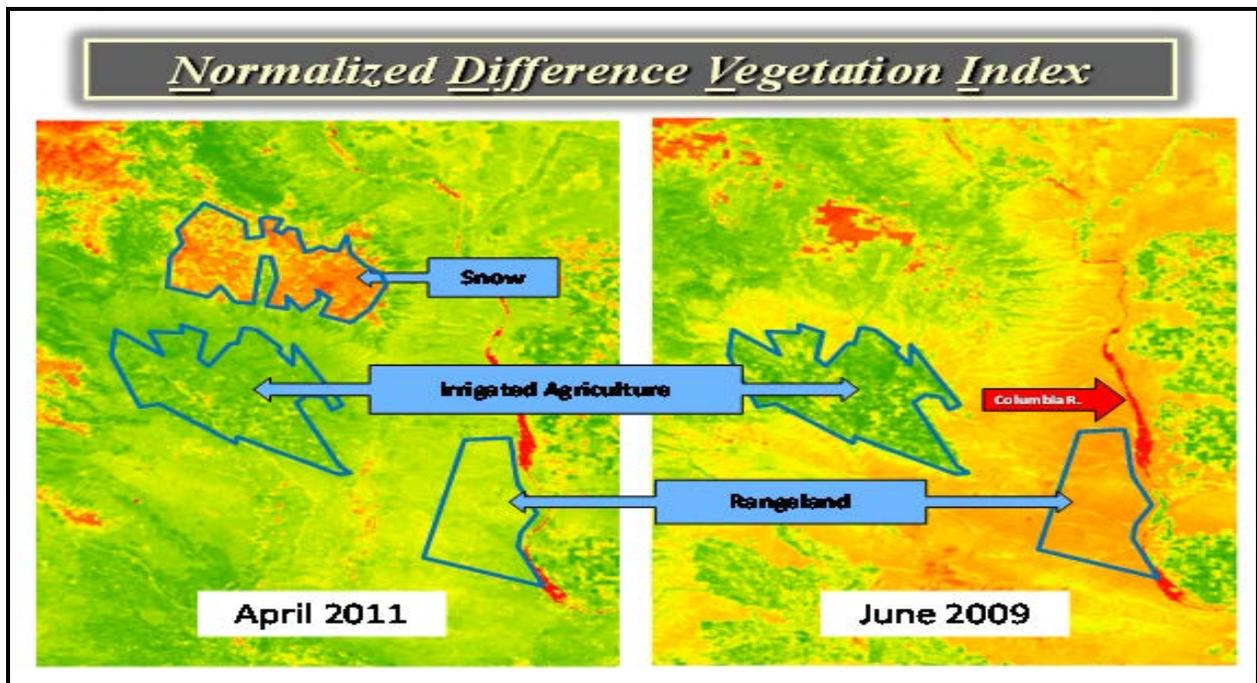
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Colockum Elk Research: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist William Moore worked to solve the problems with the Datum offset in the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI). Samples were also selected from the agricultural areas that elk frequent, which can be used as a comparison. The picture below illustrates sample sites of NDVI, with native vegetation in blue and agricultural vegetation in yellow.



NDVI sample sites of native vegetation (blue) vs. agricultural vegetation (yellow).



NDVI examples from spring and summer.

Burrowing Owls: District Wildlife Biologist Mike Livingston and Wildlife Area Worker Rocky Ross visited with a farm manager at Columbia Crest Winery in Paterson, to discuss plans for installing burrowing owl nest boxes on winery property. The winery needs to decommission an old gravel pit.

During a site visit an employee located an active owl burrow in one of the walls of the pit. Based on abundant sign including fresh feathers within the burrow, it was evident that the burrow was used as a nest this spring. The steep walls of the pit are very unstable and the burrow will likely collapse in the next year or so.

The winery is very interested in installing artificial burrows to accommodate the owl pair that nested this year as well as additional pairs in the future. They are also interested in watchable wildlife opportunities such as installing a web cam to broadcast to their tasting room. Plans were made to tentatively install two clusters of boxes in late November.

Wildlife Areas

Wild Horse CRM: L.T. Murray Manager Shana Winegeart, Assistant Manager Wayne Hunt and Environmental Engineer Rusty Gigstead attended a coordination meeting with Puget Sound Energy, DNR and livestock permittee Russ Stingley to discuss construction of permanent stock fence along the PSE-WDFW boundary.

We will research various needs and costs and then the group will meet again November 13 to form a cost-share plan. Wayne contacted Chris Cruse for an update/revision on the cost to complete the remaining boundary surveying work and should hear from him next week when he returns from a trip.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Cackling Canada Goose Mark-resight Survey: For the third year, Biologist DeBruyn participated in the annual survey of these diminutive geese. For the first time he found marked geese in both Whatcom and Skagit Counties. The goal of the cackling Canada goose mark-resight survey is to observe marked and unmarked cackling geese primarily during established survey periods in all the areas that these geese inhabit during fall–spring in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

The resulting data will be used primarily to estimate abundance of cackling Canada geese, but also to assess survival rates and movement patterns. This information will provide important verification for the population estimation techniques we currently use. Also population status has a big impact on what management actions we can bring to bear on the depredation issues we face in Oregon and Washington. A follow up survey is scheduled for next week.



Cackling Canada Geese with Lesser Snow Geese in Skagit County. The collar in the center of the picture would be read as YB (yellow/ black) AJ.

Northern Puget Sound Lesser Snow Goose Study: Another 113 geese were captured and collared on October 22 and October 24, bringing the total number of geese captured to 256. Personnel from the Skagit Wildlife Area (Area Manager Rotton and Technicians Meis and Cosgrove) were again quick to respond and provide a much needed hand in processing these birds. The willingness of staff from the Wildlife Area and other districts to be “on call” during

this work has been critical to the project's success. All geese captured to date have been banded and most are outfitted with a brown neck collar with a three figure alphanumeric identification code. A subset of geese is being equipped with collar mounted VHF radios instead of the brown neck collars to provide information on goose movements and habitat preferences. Biologist DeBruyn continued to gather liver samples from hunter harvested snow geese for lead analysis.

Beaver Management Meeting with Habitat Staff – UW Bothell Wetlands:

Biologist Anderson and Habitat Biologist Bails met with University of Washington Bothell facilities management staff to discuss beaver use of the Bothell campus wetlands adjacent to I405 and in the North Creek system. Beaver have created great pond areas along North Creek. However, new facilities are going in adjacent to the wetland restoration area so there is concern of flooding. Anderson explained there are beaver all up and down North Creek and that trapping them out is legal, but quite futile given the prime conditions and large wetland complex created there. Mitigation and conflict reduction measures are being reexamined and amended for agreement with their Hydraulic Project Approval permit.



See summaries of beaver conflict damage management at the WDFW – Living with Beavers website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/beavers.html>

Osprey Conflict Reduction joint effort with Pilchuck Audubon: Biologist Anderson met on site at Archbishop Murphy High School, in south Everett, with members of the school and Pilchuck Audubon to examine Osprey nesting areas. Osprey have nested on light ballasts at the school football field for the past three seasons. Efforts to move the nest outside of the nesting season have not worked, as Osprey are very faithful to their nest sites. Anderson provided suggestions on location of a future Osprey platform and deterrent techniques for the light ballasts. Pilchuck Audubon and the school will be seeking donations for funding and coordination of installation. A permit is needed from WDFW to remove Osprey nests from structures during the winter season, when nests are inactive and unoccupied by Osprey. When occupied, one has to consult with the federal US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Osprey Nest Destruction Permits: Biologist Anderson issued a number of permits to cell tower companies to remove nests so that safe maintenance of cell tower structures could progress

in absences of wintering Osprey. Osprey will readily rebuild at their nests sites as this species is adapted to winter nest loss on more natural structures, such as the dead top trees they use outside of urban areas which may blow out during winter storms.

Heron Working Group Annual Meeting: Biologist Anderson and Seattle area members of Heron Habitat Helpers attended the Annual Heron Working Group meeting at the Natural Resources Building in Olympia. The meeting discussed management needs of herons and waterbirds in general both in WA and across the border in Canada with members of various Canadian federal and provincial management agencies. Efforts for uniform data collection and possible citizen monitoring were discussed. More about the Heron Working Group can be found here: <http://www.heronworkinggroup.org/>

Skagit Important Bird Area (IBA): Biologist Milner worked on portions of the nomination form for designating Skagit Bay as an Audubon Society Important Bird Area. Port Susan Bay received the designation many years ago, and Skagit Audubon Chapter member Pam Pritzl is working hard at getting Skagit Bay recognized as well. We hope to have the nomination paperwork submitted by the end of November.

Wildlife Areas

Manger Link toured the Waterwheel Creek restoration project on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. This project will benefit Coho and Chinook salmon and resident trout by improving adult access, reducing stranding in isolated ponds and ditches following flood events, and improving rearing conditions for juvenile fish. Additionally, this project will benefit waterfowl populations by enhancing existing wetlands and increasing food availability and cover for nesting birds. The projects are expected to benefit the drainage district by improving water conveyance and reducing maintenance needs. Benefits to recreational users of the Cherry Valley unit include enhancement of wildlife and improved pedestrian and mower access over the replaced crossings.



Lake Terrell Dam: Volunteers from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association planted trees and shrubs at the Lake Terrell Dam project site.

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

Wildlife Management

Island Center Forest Deer Hunt: Biologist Anderson heard from staff at King County that are monitoring the hunt at Island Center Forest on Vashon. So far at least 25 hunters have made use of this area to hunt. This is the only public area on Vashon and Maury Island available to hunt deer. Hunting is limited to the General Modern Firearm Season (October 13-31). Check the WDFW Big Game Pamphlet for more information on hunting in Deer Area 4013, Vashon and Maury Islands. Most hunting is limited to private lands. Make friends with your neighbors and offer them some of your bag as thanks for access. See big game hunting season and rules information here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

North Cascades Elk Herd Plan Update Planning Process: Biologist Danilson worked with Manager Link to coordinate meetings with regional wildlife and enforcement staff to discuss strategies for upcoming hunting season to address ongoing elk related agricultural conflicts. Danilson also arranged a meeting with the Point Elliott Tribes for early December to review and discuss the draft herd plan.

Internal Mountain Goat Coordination: Biologists Danilson and Milner spent the 22nd touring portions of District 14 with Special Species Section Manager Harris to familiarize him with the Mount Baker area mountain goat population, habitat and issues. The field tour was followed by an in-house discussion to review maps and discuss coordination related to harvest management and future mountain goat translocation/augmentation.

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Release Program: Pheasant Release program was primarily staffed by volunteers this last week on the Skagit. Manager Belinda Rotton and Access Area Manager Derek Hacker contacted Snoqualmie Pheasant Release volunteers to make certain they had contact information for Skagit Wildlife Area staff during the transition period until a new Manager is hired on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

DeBay Slough and Ebey Island: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resource Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove posted the safety zone signs on the DeBay's Slough hunt unit, the sharecrop farmer completed harvest on the site. NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove checked and reposted safety zone signs on the Ebey Island property.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 450 pheasants for the regular pheasant hunting season on Lake Terrell, Intalco and BP Units.

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

WWRP planting: Natural Resource Specialist Meis prepared the final plant list and maps for the DeBay's Slough and Headquarters' plantings scheduled to begin mid-November.

Headquarters' Unit: WDFW Crew from Capital Asset Management Program arrived and began brush removal for the Wiley Slough Dredging project. Dredging scheduled to begin next week.

Nooksack Unit: Manager Kessler spoke with hunters about hunting the Tennant Lake waterfowl blinds. Tennant Lake is well used due to the open water in the lake. Kessler also posted signs clarifying the hunting rules at Tennant Lake.

Private Lands/Access

Whidbey Island Deer Hunting: Technician Otto checked and repaired signage, and toured hunt area for other problems at private lands deer hunting site on Whidbey Island.

Whidbey Island Pheasant Release Site: Technician Otto visited pheasant release sites on private land and evaluated cover and access at unit.

GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access: Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the GMU for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Technicians Otto and Deyo continued blind construction on multiple hunt units in the Region.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Lean Transformation Conference: Manger Link attended the two-day "2012 Washington State Government Lean Transformation Conference" in Tacoma. The many sessions included overviews of the principles and practices of the "LEAN" processes – adopted from the Japanese business practices (ref. Toyota Kata). The main themes – continual process improvement and eliminating waste (unnecessary items and actions) in the workflow.

Wildlife Biologist 1 Hiring Panel: Assistant District Biologist Cyra reviewed applicant responses with Waterfowl Specialist Evenson and scored applicants following interviews last week, all applicants brought an impressive set of skills to this interview. This temporary Biologist 1 position will be tasked with evaluating over 180,000 images taken during last spring's marine bird detectability flights. Work will consist of evaluating image analysis options, database construction, and then looking at those images. The final result will provide a correction factor for WDFW's winter waterfowl surveys leading to the ability to generate population

estimates instead of the current density trends. ADB Cyra also spent time reviewing a request from HR concerning bargaining unit descriptions.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton and NRS Meis conducted phone interviews for the Temporary Natural Resource Worker 2 position for the Skagit and Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas. Final approvals and paper work to be completed next week.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Seasonal Technician Recruitment: Biologists Danilson and Milner conducted interviews for this position on October 25. Danilson has proceeded with checking references. The seasonal swan technician is the individual responsible for monitoring the swan hotline, searching fields and roosting areas for dead and dying swans, collecting swans and collecting tissue samples. The term for this position is November 15, 2012, to March 15, 2013.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farms: Skagit Wildlife Area staff assisted with the processing of captured snow geese on the Fir Island Farms Snow Goose Reserve.



REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Cackling Canada Goose Population Estimate: In cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game as well as British Columbia, Region 5 Wildlife Biologists conducted surveys for cackling Canada geese. The survey involves locating flocks of cacklers and examining the birds for neck collars. Twelve-hundred cackling Canada geese were captured and marked on their breeding grounds in western Alaska's Yukon/Kuskokwim National Wildlife Refuge during the summer of 2011, with an additional 400+ birds marked in 2012. The survey protocol involves two repetitions of the effort and will generate a mark/re-sight estimate for the total population of cackling Canada geese. The small Canada geese are of particular management concern because they are used extensively for subsistence by the native peoples of western Alaska, provide recreational hunting in Washington, Oregon, and California but also cause extensive damage to agricultural crops.



Cackling Canada geese.

Cave Creek Habitat Assessment – USFS: Biologist Anderson conducted a field trip with USFS Biologists Wainwright and Caballero to look at the potential for relocating beaver into unoccupied wetland habitats on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (GP). An initial site visit was conducted at Cave Creek Wildlife Area on the Mt. Adams District to look at beaver habitat parameters including existing structures as well as current and future food resources. It was obvious from the site visit that beaver were currently occupying the Cave Creek drainage and that additional sites should be evaluated on the GP. Further analysis will be done this winter with the use of GIS to develop a list of potential drainages for relocating beaver. Site visits will be conducted again next spring and summer.



Beaver currently occupying the Cave Creek drainage.

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

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Sondino Unit Storage Building: With the help of two workers, Manager Van Leuven has been working on fixing an old historic building on the Klickitat Wildlife Area used for storage and volunteer work. Much of the roofing had blown off since last year and the siding on the west wall had many badly deteriorated boards. New treated wood posts were used to add support to the doorway, and also inside the lean-to on the east side of the building. By replacing the bad siding and the missing pieces of roofing, Van Leuven hopes to extend the useful life of the building by another 10 years.



Before repair.



After repair.

Private Lands/Access

Technician White visited lands in Klickitat County on Cooperators Western Pacific Timber, Hancock Timberlands, Pheasant release sites, and Columbia Land Trust during the week. White interacted with hunters, reminding them to respect private lands, maintained signs, and kept a count of vehicles, hunters, and camps.

During the week 29 hunters were directly contacted, 53 vehicles noted, and 34 camps visited. Five hunters had taken a deer and hunters reported a lot of activity. Handouts, which include a map and rules for responsible use of private lands, were well received. Rains have greatly reduced fire danger. Snowfall is limited to the upper portions of Western Pacific Timber (Simcoe Mtns) above 3,000 feet, and above 3,000 feet on Hancock Timberlands.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gophers: District 15 personnel were focused on completing pocket gopher plots in Mason County and District 11 staff were focused on completing plots in Thurston and Pierce Counties. Biologist Michaelis visited five plots in Grays Harbor County and seven plots in Thurston County. Two plots in Thurston County near the town of Bucoda had potential gopher mounds. All survey plots are associated with the random plot survey being conducted across portions of Thurston, Mason, Pierce, Grays Harbor, and Lewis counties in an effort to identify relative gopher presence among a variety of habitat and soil types.

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologist Hoenes began working on a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Fund proposal to secure funding that will allow for the initiation of predator control in areas where western snowy plovers nest. Washington's population of adult snowy plovers has been declining since 2005 and the primary cause of nest failures has been predation by ravens and crows.

Oregon observed similarly suppressed recovery until they initiated predator control in 2004. Since then adult populations have increased to near recovery objectives largely because of increases in nest success and fledgling survival.

Elk Hoof Rot Report: Biologist Hoenes fielded a call from a citizen near the town of Brooklyn that was reporting an elk that died in their pasture and had a severe case of hoof disease. The reporting party also noted there were at least two other elk (cows) in the herd that were also limping. Hoenes directed the reporting party to WDFW's online reporting tool.

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

Wildlife Management

Cackling Canada Goose Surveys : Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis participated in the first of four special cackling Canada Goose surveys. Michaelis observed a total of 610 geese in N. Pacific, NW Lewis, and SW Thurston counties. He also observed a collared Aleutian Canada goose.

Canada Goose Check-Station: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom manned the Canada goose check stations in Raymond and Reikkola. The check stations were only open on the 24th (Wednesday) this week and Michaelis checked 32 geese from 11 hunters and Sundstrom checked two geese from one hunter.

Vail Tree Farm Check Station: Biologist Hoenes and Michaelis worked the Vail Tree Farm deer check station during the weekend of October 27. There were 1,100 hunters that went through the check station during the two days it was open, but only 29 deer were checked.



Private Lands/Access

Washington State Archery Association (WSAA): Bio Harris gave a presentation on industrial forest lands access in Region 6 at the WSAA convention on Saturday 27 October 2012. The convention is a three day event where affiliated archery clubs meet to present awards and discuss issues. The presentation discussed what the WDFW is trying to do to maintain reasonable access, understanding the landowners, what's happening to access, and what hunters need to do to assist the WDFW and themselves to maintain reasonable access.

During the presentation most of the audience gasped when a slide of lands that are currently under a "pay to access" program and lands that could potentially be under a pay to access program in the future if one of the landowners decides to go that route. After the presentation many people commented that they found the presentation very informative and were happy that the WDFW was taking access seriously.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Cackling Goose Survey Training: Biologists Hoenes and Sundstrom attended cackling goose survey training in Oregon. The training was provided because the cackling goose surveys conducted in Washington are part of a multi-state effort being coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to estimate the size of the cackling goose population that winters in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The training is necessary because the survey incorporates mark-resight methodology and it is imperative that surveyors adhere to the sampling protocol and design. Otherwise, estimates may be biased and not provide accurate population estimates.

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Gail Olson attended The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting held in Portland, OR, October 15-17. Gail attended two timely symposia at the conference, one on genomics and the other on hierarchical modeling. She was able to make immediate use of the training she received by incorporating both of these cutting edge techniques into a pre-proposal submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Recovery Program funds. The proposed study intends to develop new methods of estimating Mazama pocket gopher abundance and also to provide appropriate sample data for a genomics study of relatedness and connectivity among pocket gopher populations. These tasks will fill critical information needs to assess the status of and manage recovery for this state Threatened and Federal Candidate species in Washington.