

Wildlife Program

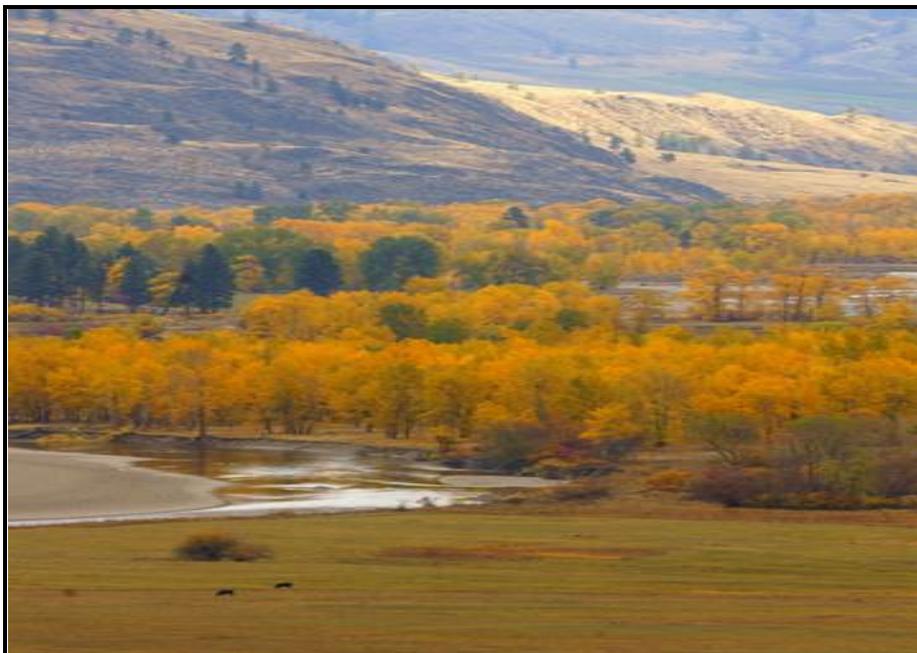
Week of September 24-30, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Addition: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) completed the closing of the 787.22 acre Cutchie Phase 2 transaction in Okanogan County. This phase, along with the previously acquired Cutchie property, lies in two general areas located along the Similkameen River. The western portion lies approximately 14 miles northwest of Oroville (three miles west of Nighthawk), spanning the valley floor between public lands in the Little Chopaka Mountains and the Chopaka Mountains, near Loomis State Forest. The eastern portion lies seven miles northwest of Oroville (three miles east of Nighthawk) and is interspersed among public lands.

The property provides habitat and connectivity for white-tailed deer, mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and moose, along with potentially threatened and/or endangered large carnivores. The extensive riverine and riparian areas provide habitat for waterfowl, furbearers and two rare freshwater mussels, the California floater and the western ridged mussel. Additionally, protection of this watershed property will benefit downstream migrating anadromous salmonids, including the endangered Upper Columbia spring Chinook and summer steelhead.

This purchase was made possible through a partnership with the Trust for Public Lands who provided bridge funding for the transaction. The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program by Jim Olson as part of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. Operational funding will be provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The purchase of this phase was ultimately paid for by BPA addressing Columbia River mitigation.



Cutchie Property, Scotch Creek Wildlife Area.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee (GNLCC SC) Meeting: John Pierce attended the Great Northern Steering Committee meeting last week. One of the main agenda items was for the GNLCC SC to review and adopt the GNLCC strategic plan. John gave a presentation to the Committee on the importance of integration of conservation strategies and activities across jurisdictions (both geographic and institution), which was integrated into the overall strategic plan.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Surrogate Species Workshop: John Pierce attended a USFWS hosted workshop to learn about the new “Surrogate Species” initiative/strategy that the USFWS is considering adopting as a framework for focusing attention as a surrogate to represent ecological integrity (e.g. structure, process, function) of large landscapes. The Service will be hosting several workshops and soliciting input from its partner over the course of the next year. Partners will have until early December to submit comments on the proposed guidance document they have authored.

Sinlahekin Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) Workshop: Wildlife Program staff hosted a citizen science training workshop on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area over this past weekend, as part of the WDFW Ecological Integrity Monitoring project. There were 15 participants that were very engaged and positive, including some teachers. With the involvement of teachers there is clearly growth potential to expand this effort. Many participants expressed interest in seeing this expanded to other wildlife areas. This was particularly an issue with teachers that would like to stay close to their respective schools. Wildlife Area Manager Dale Swedberg was extremely supportive throughout the day, which made the process much smoother. The facilities for the workshop were spectacular. The materials appeared to be on target. The participants had numerous suggestions that are being summarized by Margaret Tudor.

Analysis of potential Chinook fishery impacts on Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW): Scott Pearson and John Pierce participated in the third workshop hosted by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to examine the strength of evidence of potential impacts on SRKW populations from Puget Sound Chinook fisheries. Scott presented information on the interaction of other marine mammals with Chinook populations. As an invited member of the science panel, Scott also discussed issues and concerns with uncertainty of the scientific data and cause and effect versus correlative relationships. Most agree that the data available was not strong enough to conclude cause and affect impacts, but there were several direct correlations between SRKW population dynamics and Chinook abundance. A final report from an independent science panel is expected to be released later this year.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wild Fires and Spotted Owl Habitat – Natural Resource Scientist Buchannan examined the mapped perimeter of the Wenatchee/Table Mountain fire complex as of September 20. It

appears that fires have burned to some extent within 17 management circles of territorial status Spotted Owls; five Spotted Owl site centers (nest sites) are located within the boundary of mapped fire areas. There have been numerous additional fires – mostly smaller ones – in the eastern Cascades recently and some of these may have burned, or are still burning, within owl management circles. Depending on fire intensity, some owl habitat may not have been appreciably modified; comprehensive estimates of habitat loss have not been generated.

Taylor’s Checkerspot: Endangered Species Biologist David Hays conducted a field tour of habitat restoration activities for Taylor’s checkerspot, a state endangered butterfly, at West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area and Scatter Creek Wildlife Area with visiting scientists from California, local USFWS biologists, biologists from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and other WDFW staff. Biologist Ann Potter provided information on biology, local history, and management of the Taylor’s checkerspot. Efforts are underway by WDFW and many other partners to restore south Sound prairies for this butterfly and re-establish populations.

Citizen Science Opportunities for Pocket Gopher Surveys – Section Manager Bruce Thompson and Region 6 Wildlife Program Manager Mick Cope delivered training presentations to 32 students in two Environmental Awareness classes taught by Craig Baker at New Market Skills Center in Tumwater. As a citizen science endeavor, these students will be engaged in providing additional on-the-ground survey of historic and opportunistic pocket gopher survey sites. Mr. Baker’s oversight and tying student work to class responsibilities is expected to be a strong stimulus to providing quality site data and greater outreach into communities.

Arid Lands Initiative Pilot Project Area (Douglas County) - At the request of Regional Directors Dennis Beach and Jeff Tayer, and The Nature Conservancy, Section leader Rodrick organized a meeting to review existing Arid Lands Initiative partner efforts and to discuss opportunities for improving collaboration and effectiveness. We agreed to form a local implementation team to collaborate on a specific habitat protection and restoration project.

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Rehabilitation: The lengthy Wildlife Rehabilitation Washington Administrative Code (WAC) revision project is proceeding. The outreach letter announcing the forthcoming WAC changes went out to 65 Washington wildlife rehabilitators, five falconers who are assisting with raptor conditioning, and the appropriate WDFW Regional staff. Rehabilitators and falconers were asked to request a copy of the final draft if they would like to participate in the review; several have already requested that draft.

Thompson is working on Wildlife Disease webpage describing some of the most common diseases the public will encounter. Three of these are potentially dangerous zoonotics. The information pages are: Canine distemper, Sarcocystosis or “Ricebreast,” Tularemia, Hydatid Cyst Disease (*Echinococcus granulosus*), Raccoon roundworm, and Deer papillomas. A version

of the deer papilloma page will be published in this fall's Crossing Paths electronic newsletter. All of these articles have been sent to Dr. Kristin Mansfield for review.

The 2013-2015 Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant will open for application this fall. Thompson is revising the Request for Proposal (RFP) and will send it out to all Washington rehabilitators announcing this call for applications. We are anticipating another one hundred thousand dollars for the rehabilitation grant.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation webpage has a dedicated email address that goes to Tricia Thompson for reply. A report with the following photograph was sent in by a citizen.



Deceased seal with identifying numbers on the side.

Falconry: Thompson corrected two falconry exams and was able to mail letters of passing grades. Thompson also issued three falconry upgrades from Apprentice to General, issued two new apprentice licenses, one license renewal, and mailed out five falconry packets to interested people. Falconry is a popular hunting sport in Washington with a very active falconer population. Tricia spent time with enforcement officers identify raptor feathers.

Scientific Collection Permits (SCP): Thompson reviewed comments on and approved three SCP applications. On one SCP application reviewed, Thompson requested more information from WDFW biologists to complete the approval process. Thompson also compiled and sent out two additional applications for review.

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

Citizen Science, Ecological Inventory Monitoring (EIM) – Wildlife Outreach staff James Chandler and Chuck Gibilisco worked with WDFW Science and web staff to finalize details on the second WDFW citizen science collaboration involving scientists and registered public members from Washington. The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area is second in a series of select WDFW

lands to be targeted for the ecological integrity assessment and monitoring. Participants responded to agency invitations via Facebook and news releases to meet with resource scientists and managers for training in special techniques used when collecting long-term ecological data on select WDFW managed lands.

WDFW and EIM team members from the Science, Outreach, and Lands Divisions conducted the second [Ecological Integrity Monitoring workshop](#) at the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Similar to the first EIM workshop held at the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area, the project workshop attracted a wide array of people including college professors, high school teachers, retired educators, resource specialists, and college students.

Wildlife Area Manager Dale Swedberg hosted the fifteen participants through a full day of activities directed by Michael Schroeder, Ph.D., and Matt Vander Haegen, Ph.D., and assisted by Margaret Tudor, Ph.D., Andy Duff, James Chandler, Chuck Gibilisco, and Kerri Wheeler.



Dr. Michael Schroeder instructs volunteer citizen scientists on conducting photo point monitoring on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

The workshop is one part of a long-term pilot Ecological Integrity Assessment and Monitoring project for four WDFW Wildlife Areas. Project citizen scientists will be engaged in a Level II rapid assessment using relatively simple environmental indicators that contributes data used to rank ecosystems and manage the lands and species on that wildlife area. Another EIM workshop is being planned for October 20 at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area.

A new working Citizen Science webpage is available, providing a single source for registered project participants to download project protocols and updates as they are generated or modified.

The long-term EIM project is initially working with four pilot areas and using a citizen science approach for specific project tasks. Project baseline data will be used by WDFW to help shape management decisions and policies regarding WDFW wildlife areas.

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

Wolf Outreach - The [Wolf Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) section of the wolf webpage is updated. The revised FAQ is divided into three portions: general information on wolves, wolves and livestock, and wolves and big game. WDFW staff is encouraged to direct the public to this information when asked questions about wolves.

A new brochure, "[A Guide to Addressing Wolf-Livestock Conflicts](#)," is now available on the web. Copies of the brochure are currently in print. In addition, a refrigerator magnet is being produced with the toll-free depredation number and instructions for preserving the scene. The manual, "Procedures for investigation of Livestock Injuries & Mortalities: a Manual for WDFW Field Personnel," can also be accessed from this link.

Wildlife Outreach Volunteers: Volunteer Management Coordinator James Chandler provided assistance to the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) fund grantees to recruit and register their volunteers.

James provided Community Event Registration and Volunteer Information System (CERVIS) administrative training to Saltese Flats and Raptor Citizen Science Project members and Stefanie Bergh of WDFW.

Chandler assisted additional wildlife staff with posting and recruiting volunteers for projects, and activated the CERVIS Interest Category. This feature enables volunteers to submit their interest directly to agency staff. This tool improved recruiting efforts for Citizen Science and Ecological Monitoring training.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1

Biologist Shepherd and Sergeant Charron placed cameras in the Wedge to determine if and where wolves are still present, and removed wolf bait from the Diamond M. property. Biologist Shepherd coordinated potential fixed wing flights with Carnivore Section Lead Martorello to assist with wolf removal. Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker participated in a conference call with Carnivore Section Lead Martorello, several biologists, and officers to discuss the removal efforts and equipment retrieval from the wolf removal team. Biologist Shepherd, Technician Baker, and Fish Biologist Baker spotlighted Smackout Meadow and surrounding areas with intent to haze wolves using paintballs on multiple nights. Biologist Shepherd de-

scrambled, mapped, and texted Smackout wolf locations to range rider Leisa Hill everyday of the week. Biologist Shepherd submitted the invoice for range rider Leisa Hill.

Technician Baker checked and retrieved a trail camera in the Salmo pack territory and updated Biologist Frame on current trail camera sets. Technician Baker maintained the Radio Activated Guard (RAG) box setup on a cattle operation off Aladdin Road and met with Range Rider Leisa Hill to discuss recent wolf activity on a grazing allotment. Technician Baker retrieved equipment from the Regional Office, worked on ordering wolf-hazing equipment, and prepared trail cameras for deployment in the field. Technician Baker tested, packaged, and mailed trail cameras in need of repair, filed videos from trail cameras, and communicated with volunteers.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife watching at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA) - Grouse tracker Thorburn's report from September 26 includes these birding comments.

“There were signs of life in the burn area green sprouts of grass and lots of northern harriers and red-tailed hawks taking advantage of the good views. The Headquarters' yard continues its migration bonanza. In addition to the huge waves of white-crowned sparrows, yellow-rumped warblers, and ruby-crowned kinglets, I saw Swainson's thrush, heard Hermit's thrush, and managed to get identifiable photos of the attached tan-striped white-throated sparrow. Judging from the birder listservs, there seems to be an influx of white-throated sparrows in the Inland Northwest. It's unusual, in my experience, to see the tan-striped phase.”



White-throated sparrow, tan-striped phase, spotted at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Headquarters on September 26, 2012. Dr. Kim Thorburn photo.

REGION 2

Wolves

North Cascade Grizzly Bear Hair-Snag Surveys: Biologists Fitkin, Heinlen, Welfelt, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staff retrieved 10 hair-snag sites and cameras from the northwest portion of the Pasayten Wilderness. Cameras also captured a wolf video and a lynx video from this remote corner of the wilderness. It may be that the wolf is one of the animals believed to inhabit the Hozomeen area during the winter months.



Wolf track spotted at the Pasayten Wilderness.

District Biologists

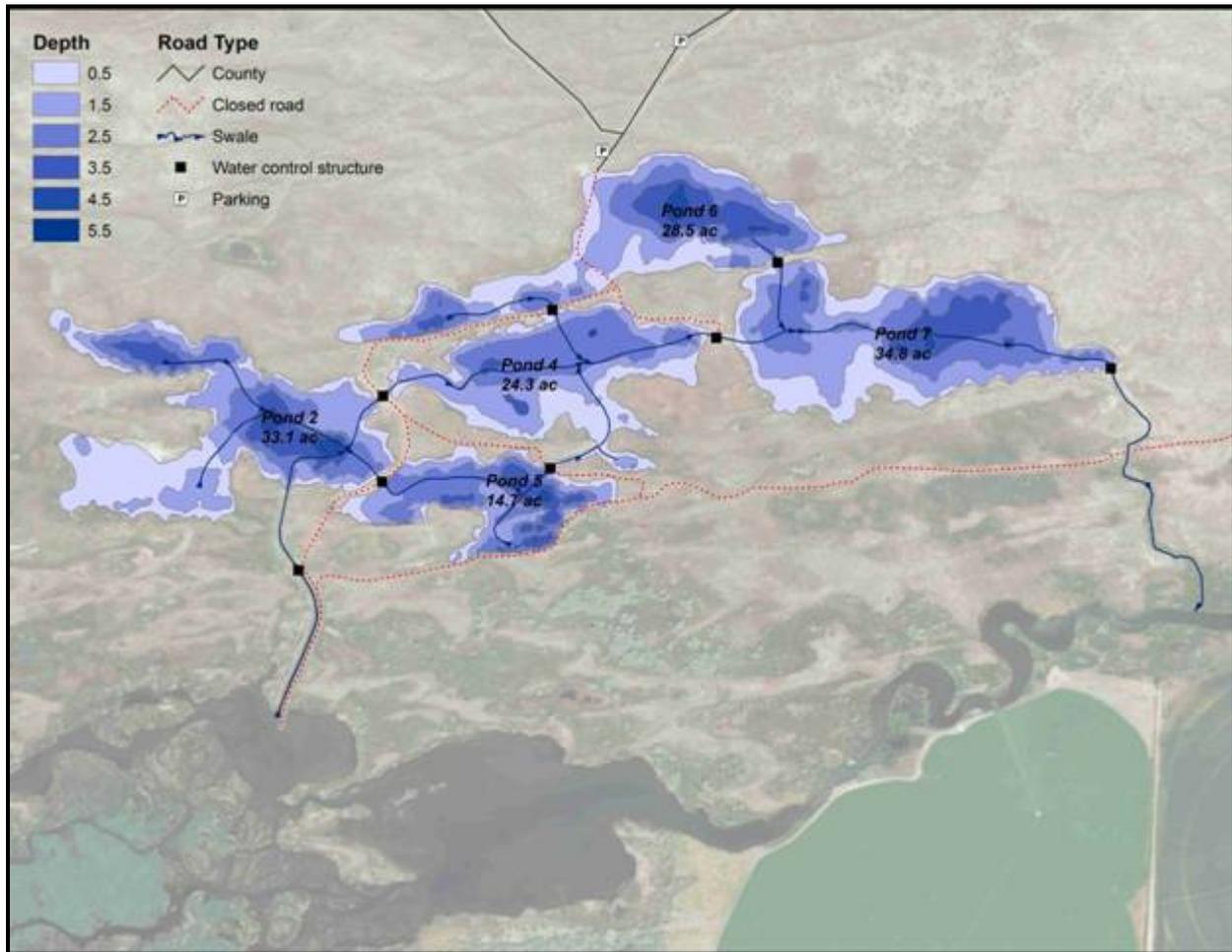
District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Sara Gregory

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Caspian Terns: Biologist Finger and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Monda attended a conference call with the Inland Avian Predation Working Group to receive updates for mitigation site alternatives that occur from California to Alaska. Most of the group supported mitigation sites which occur in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and little support was felt for maintaining a breeding population inland on the Columbia Plateau. Some interest was generated for the California sites. Finger reiterated to the group that we prefer to maintain a breeding colony within the Columbia Plateau.

Finger began drafting a Caspian Tern Supplemental Feeding Proposal for the Frenchmen Regulated Access Area. The proposal is a two-part approach to evaluating the feasibility of a

supplemental feeding program. The first and most important part seeks to determine whether Caspian Tern foraging behavior can be altered by providing a readily available supplemental food source. The second part of the project is to determine whether the supplemental food source can be propagated on site for a reasonable cost. To determine whether adequate depth exists within the project, Finger used topographic data points for Ducks Unlimited to develop hydrologic models for each pond at full pool.



District 6: Okanogan District - Scott Fitkin / Jeff Heinlen

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

North Cascade Grizzly Bear Hair-Snag Surveys: Biologists Fitkin, Heinlen, Welfelt and USFS staff retrieved 10 hair-snag sites and cameras from the northwest portion of the Pasayten Wilderness. Cameras recorded black bears at six of 10 sites and we retrieved probable bear hair from four sites. Cameras also captured a wolf video and a lynx video from this remote corner of the wilderness. It may be that the wolf is one of the animals believed to inhabit the Hozomeen area during the winter months. The objective of this project is to collect data on grizzly status/distribution in the North Cascades Ecosystem. Results could inform distinct population segment status and potential future recovery efforts.



Pasayten Wilderness.

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

Sinlahekin Bighorn Sheep Management: The 2012 Sinlahekin Bighorn Sheep ram permit winner was successful. Assistant Biologist Heinlen talked to the hunter who was very pleased with this once in a lifetime hunt and the three-quarter-plus curl ram he harvested.

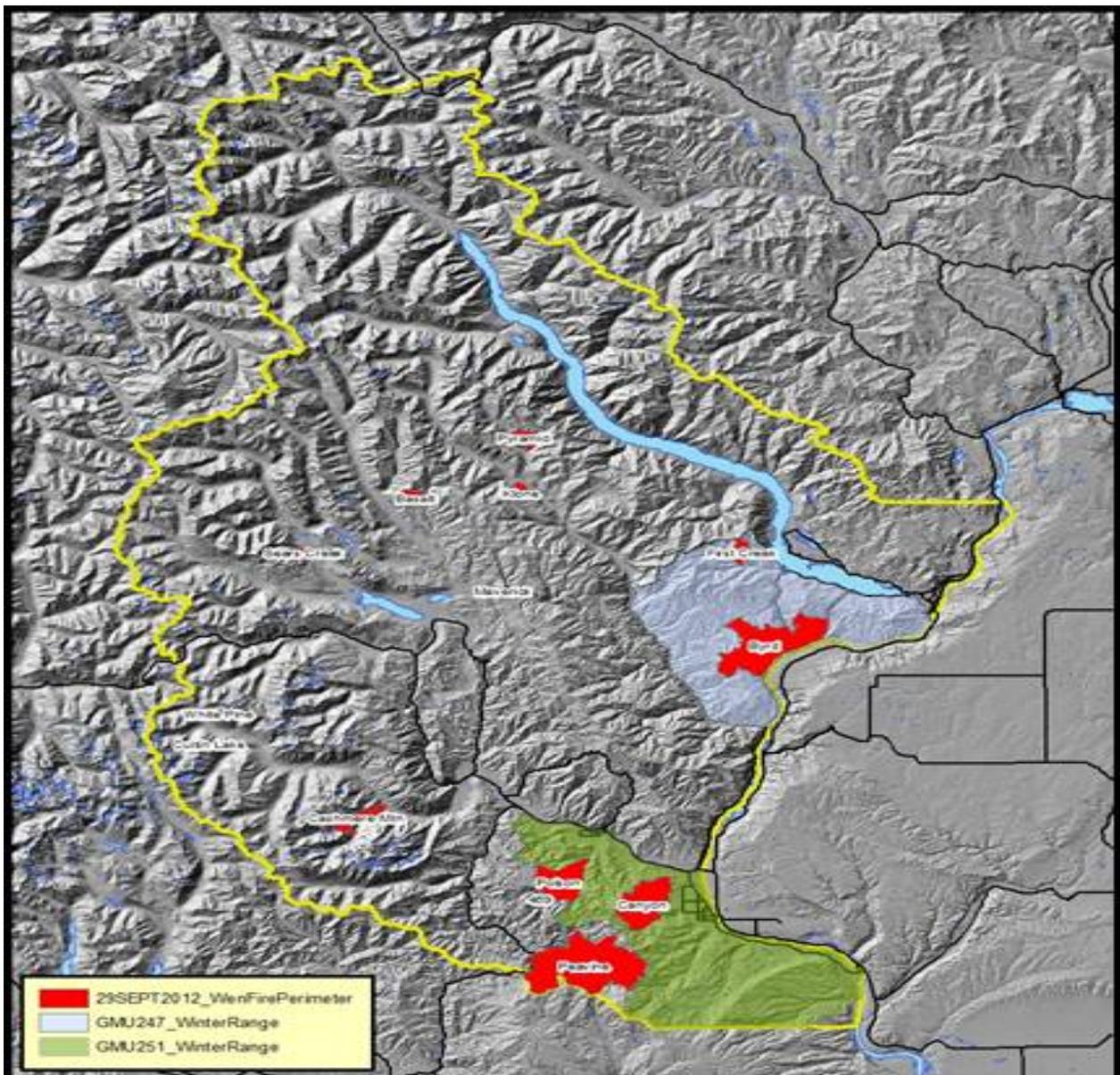


District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie

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

Elk Damage: Biologist Volsen worked with the Enforcement Program to resolve elk damage issues in the Malaga area. Master hunters were used to move elk out of four orchards on Wenatchee Heights. Hunters harvested two cow elk and were successful in hazing elk out of problem areas. If problems persist, the option to use master hunters or permit hunters is available.

Wildfires



Chelan County wildfire perimeters and their relationship to mule deer winter range.

District 7 (Chelan County) Fires	Total Acres	Acres within GMU 251 Winter Range	Acres within GMU 247 Winter Range
Peavine	19,254	136	
Byrd	14,164		14,164
Canyon	7,557	7,557	
Poison	5,910	2,783	
Cashmere Mtn	2,162		
Pyramid	1,435		
Klone	1,385		
First Creek	1,361		1,361
Basalt	982		
Sears Creek	517		
Cuitin Lake	217		
White Pine	58		
469	21		
Maverick	21		
Totals	55,045	10,476	15,525
GMU 251	333,353	132,425	
GMU 247	142,429		115,355

Acres of Chelan County wildfires within mule deer range.

Wildlife Areas

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

Fire camp on the Methow Wildlife Area: The Okanogan complex fires are winding down with command and operations being transferred from Oregon Incident Management Team 1 to a local Type 3 team on Wednesday, September 26. Final burnout operations were conducted late in the week and moved these fires into mop-up and monitor mode. The fire camp on the Methow Wildlife Area, which reached a peak of nearly 800 fire fighters, has been incrementally demobilizing through the week and should be completely vacated in the next couple of weeks.

Over the past week Methow staff finalized negotiations for rehabilitation costs for the site. Included are weed control, removing newly constructed approaches, and reseeding the field. This site worked so well for a lower valley fire camp that several members of the Type I team along with local USFS district staff asked if they could designate the site as a permanent camp site (i.e. they would use the site for any future fires in the lower valley). This is a topic that will be discussed at length internally before giving a reply.



Two of the three fires have been contained and are in the mop-up phase. The remaining fire in the Gold Creek drainage continues to spread. Extremely steep rugged terrain, high fuel loads, and limited road access are hampering control efforts. USFS personnel believe that they will be working on this fire until the snow flies.

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

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Gate Installation: Maintenance Mechanic Ed Pierson and Natural Resource Technician Angel Hastings finished the installation of gates on the Bridgeport Bar unit. During the last year an increasing number of people have been ignoring the “No Unauthorized Vehicles” signs on the unit. As a result, irrigation lines have been damaged and garbage has been dumped. Based on items left behind, a variety of human activities one would rather not think about. Consequently, gates became a necessity. Installation included setting steel posts in cement, welding hinges to posts and gates, and painting.



Fire Rehab – Central Ferry Canyon Unit: Angel continued mowing the remains of bitterbrush within fields scheduled for reseeding. After suffering a number of tire repairs since beginning this process, we will be burrowing the Challenger 55 Ron Fox is currently using on Chelan Butte to Central Ferry Canyon to finish this step in the project.



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Table Mountain Fire: Colockum Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Karl Schulke spent most of the week dealing with the fire related issues. As of Sunday, September 30, a total of 40,121 acres have burned in the Table Mountain Fire. The Incident management team has reported that 1,467 acres of that have been on WDFW Lands in the Colockum Wildlife Area.

The entire Colockum Wildlife Area was closed for five days from September 21-26, because of the fire danger. At noon on September 26, WDFW lands east of the Colockum Pass Road were reopened to public access, leaving approximately 15,000 acres of WDFW lands west of Colockum Pass closed.

Mike Williams, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided the first picture below of the conditions at Naneum Lake. The contrast between before and after the fire is stark.



The Table Mountain Fire produced a noticeable change (left) to Naneum Lake. Mike Williams and Karl Schulke photos.

Wild Rose Fire: Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Ross Huffman and Assistant Manager Bruce Berry coordinated with Operations Manager and Incident Commander for the Yakima Complex Fires on rehabilitation of the fire lines on the Wild Rose Fire. About 0.75 miles of fire line were constructed with a dozer on WDFW ownership. All the fire lines will be repaired by placing material back into the line and building water bars to prevent erosion. The US Forest Service will be supplying a native seed mix to spread on all the fire lines. The old roads and new fire lines will be abandoned under the Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) by the fire rehab crew and will meet DNR abandonment standards.



Fire line built on WDFW land for the Wild Rose Fire. This portion is on a steep slope. All the material will be placed back in the line and water bars will be added.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Mountain Goat Augmentation Project: District Biologist Milner met with Section Lead Rich Harris, Region 6 Wildlife Program staff, and staff from Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest to discuss issues relating to mountain goats on the Olympic Peninsula. Olympic National Park is gearing up to conduct an analysis of goats within their ownership. The North Cascades could potentially be an area where goats could be placed if the Park decides to remove them.

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

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Youth Pheasant Hunting: Manager Paulson talked to a proud grandfather who was extremely happy with his grandson's pheasant hunting experience at the Stillwater Unit. On Saturday, six birds got up in front of his grandson, four of which were roosters. On Sunday, four birds got up in front of his grandson, three of which were roosters.

The proud grandfather said, "The birds look good and so does the Unit."

Whatcom Wildlife Area Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 450 pheasants for the senior and start of the regular pheasant hunting season. Opening day was very well attended at the Lake Terrell, Intalco and British Petroleum units.

Skagit Wildlife Area Pheasant Release Program: The pheasant releases for the general opener were completed by volunteers and wildlife area staff. Overall comments on the bird numbers and condition were good. The car count at the new Bow Hill Road pheasant release site was 15 cars on opening morning. Hunter comments were generally good with some slight misunderstanding of the available hunt area.

Wildlife Management

Lesser Snow Goose Project: District Biologist Danilson continued to make preparations for the upcoming lesser snow goose project which will commence in October. This project will improve our understanding of the distribution, philopatry, resource selection, migratory patterns and timing, and total population size of lesser snow geese that winter in the North Puget Sound Area. The project is a collaborative effort between District 14 personnel, Waterfowl Section personnel, and the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Washington.

Citizen Science Shorebird Projects: District Biologist Milner met with Gary Slater from Ecostudies Institute to plan shorebird activities during the 2013 Stanwood Snow Goose Festival.

Milner and Slater toured venues for hosting the celebration of the successful designation of Skagit and Port Susan Bays as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site.

Milner and Slater also toured the Port Susan Preserve owned by the Nature Conservancy. This site is well placed for field trips to view birds and a restoration involving dike removal was completed about two weeks ago. Nature Conservancy staff will be explaining the conservation goals for the restoration project and will be allowing field trip access during the Snow Goose Festival.

Private Lands/Access

2012 Westside Pheasant Release (New) Location: Region 4 staff continued to address comments and concerns from neighboring landowners and pheasant hunters about the site.

Whidbey Island Pheasant Release: Biologist Roozen and Technician Otto met with partner landowners, reviewed Contracts and Payment System (CAPS) contract, and discussed site management for the hunting season. Roozen and Otto also discussed increased future participation in the pheasant and other private land access programs.

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

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton toured several wildlife area marsh sites with Professor Kern Ewing from the University of Washington. Dr. Ewing brings his restoration ecology class out to the Skagit Wildlife area for an annual visit to discuss vegetation distribution, salinity, soils, and tidal and estuarine processes.

Wildlife Management

Wolf Management: Assistant District Biologist DeBruyn fielded several calls from members of the public outraged with our eradication of the Wedge Pack.

Private Lands/Access

Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 Elk Hunting Access: Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the unit for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity. Additionally, Biologist Roozen met with several successful hunters to collect their access key and incisor teeth. Roozen also met with and issued access keys to GMU 418 permit holders.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen drafted CAPS agreements, created multiple hunt unit maps, and (Biologist Roozen and Technician Otto) continued discussions with potential partner landowners. Technicians Otto and Deyo began blind construction on multiple hunt units in Whatcom County, with Skagit and Snohomish counties scheduled for early October.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Immobilization Workshop: Acting District Biologist Anderson and Assistant District Biologist DeBruyn attended an immobilization workshop in Olympia designed to train biologists and enforcement staff the policies and procedures required to safely capture wildlife using drugs. DeBruyn also taught the raptor handling segment of the curriculum.



District Biologist Anderson demonstrating safe restraint procedures.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama pocket gopher surveys: Biologists George and Bergh completed the fourth and part of the fifth waves of Mazama pocket gopher random plot 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. This round of surveys was conducted on both public and private land and did not result in any definite detection of Mazama pocket gophers.

Oregon White Oak Management: Biologists Anderson and Van Leuven met with Wild Turkey Federation Biologist Moore to discuss potential habitat improvement projects in Klickitat County. The emphasis of the meeting and field visit was to identify Oregon White Oak habitat that is in need of restoration. In addition, a visit was made to a USFS oak restoration site to see an example of a Douglas fir thinning/oak enhancement project completed this year. Other sites visited had emphasis on private and state lands in the Big White Salmon River drainage where young Douglas fir stands were overtopping older oak trees. The goal of future work would be to enhance oak stands to increase the amount of mast available to a variety of wildlife including wild turkeys.



Douglas fir thinning/oak enhancement project completed this year.

Weyerhaeuser Exclosure Tour: Biologists Stephens and Bergh attended a tour of wildlife exclosures on Weyerhaeuser's St. Helens Tree Farm. The exclosures are constructed to keep out all mammals while receiving the same planting and herbicide treatments as the land directly outside of the exclosure. Weyerhaeuser has installed these exclosures in various places on the tree farm since 2007 in order to better understand the effects of browsing. Inside the exclosures they have found that conifers are four-to-five feet taller and exhibit more uniform growth. There are also a variety of shrubs and forbs including cherry, elderberry, cascara, and fireweed. The herbicide treatments that were applied inside and directly outside of the exclosures are only effective at suppressing shrubs for two to three years, so the thought is that browsing pressure is suppressing shrubs outside of the exclosures after the two to three year period. Research on these exclosures and the interaction of herbivory and herbicide affects is being conducted and the results will be forthcoming.

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

Wildlife Management

Fire Danger Closures and Hunting Prospects: Biologist Anderson spent most of the week responding to public inquiries about hunting access, fire restrictions, and big game population reports. This year's exceptionally hot dry weather has resulted in forest land closures throughout the Region. Currently the largest fire in Region 5 is the Cascade Creek fire on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The Mt. Adams Wilderness is currently closed to public access because of this fire and most likely will remain closed through most of the fall hunting season.

Access

Lacamas Lake Launch Repair: Access Program staff Spangler and Rhodes worked on repairing the boat launch at Lacamas Lake. Spangler and Rhodes hauled and set planks with a boom truck. The two also hauled, filled, and packed gravel.



Lacamas launch repair.



Lacamas launch repair.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama pocket gopher (MPG) surveys: Biologists Linders and Walker completed another 21 survey plots on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Access has been acquired for all but seven plots on the Artillery Impact Area (AIA) and work on these 23 plots is scheduled for completion on Sunday, September 30. Eight plots remain of the 83 plots assigned; these will be completed pending access. Additional plots assigned last week will need to be reviewed for access prior to completion.

Biologist Michaelis visited 22 plots in Grays Harbor and Thurston County as part of WDFW's effort to improve its understanding about Mazama pocket gopher distribution. Possible gopher mounds were observed near the town of Bucoda.

Biologist Ament conducted a Mazama pocket gopher search at Blue Mountain/Deer Park area in Olympic National Park (ONP) on September 25, with no gopher mounds detected. Biologist

McMillan contacted park staff to have herself and Biologist Ament included on the current permit issued to John Fleckenstein from DNR. The park has approved the request and is currently processing the paperwork.

Biologist Tirhi continued with Mazama pocket gopher Wave 4 surveys in Pierce and Thurston County, primarily on agricultural sites. All eight of the Wave 4 plots Tirhi completed were negative for pocket gopher. Tirhi will complete the three remaining plots from Wave 4 and begin Wave 5 assignments this week.

Mountain Goat Olympic Peninsula and North Cascades – On September 26, Region 6 Program Manager (RPM) Cope, Biologists McMillan and Skriletz (Region 6), Biologist Milner (Region 4), and Section Manager Rich Harris attended the Quilcene mountain goat meeting. The meeting intended to bring Olympic National Park, Olympic National Forest, and WDFW staff from Headquarters (HQ), Region 6, and Region 4 together to discuss the future of Mountain Goat management on the Olympic Peninsula habitats and the North Cascades. This was the first of what will need to be several meetings as this topic moves forward.

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

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer - Capitol Forest: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared black-tail deer in Capitol Forest. Currently, Michaelis is monitoring eight deer (three does, three fawns, and two yearlings) and no mortalities were reported during the week.

Pysht Cluster: Two of the collared does have failed to send the iridium system their locations since mid August (W. Siebert Doe download and location from the ground has been unsuccessful for about a month, no recent observations). Biologist McMillan downloaded the data from the personal digital assistant (PDA) and the handheld unit, then forwarded on to Biologist Rice.

Private Lands/Access

Biologist Harris contacted some landowners in areas that have the general muzzleloader season opening this weekend. The landowners contacted were in areas where industrial fire levels lowered. He is requesting consideration of allowing walking access. At this time there has been no indication if the landowners will allow. It is still very dry out there! Harris will continue to attempt to work with landowners to get access to some GMU's for the muzzleloader hunters.

Industrial Fire Levels: Many of the zones in Region 6 have dropped to a level two or lower. Industrial level three is still present in some areas. Currently, much of Skokomish and Satsop are in a level three zone. Things are still very dry, so it is unlikely that some landowners will increase public access until we receive appreciable rain.

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

Wildlife Management

Dungeness River Festival - The Audubon/River Center staff held their annual River Festival on September 28-29. Biologist Ament put together an exceptional booth that was very well received by middle school students on Friday and the general public on Saturday. She chose a theme of bear/cougar encounters with humans. Approximately 900 students from local schools attended the festival on Friday along with hundreds from the general public on Saturday.



GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Recovering! - Biologist McMillan is recovering from a late August surgery. Recovery includes walking every day. The route that Biologist McMillan had been walking was presumed to be four-to-five miles, but after tracking with the MapMyWalk app for smartphones, she discovered that the route has been a six-to-seven mile venture. We are happy to have Anita back!