

Wildlife Program

Week of April 14-20, 2014

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

District 1 Golden Eagle Survey: Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince teamed with Colville Confederated Tribal Biologist Cory Peone this week in conducting “Round 2” for a helicopter survey of Golden Eagle breeding territories (see photos). Helicopter combined with ground-based surveys have documented evidence of Golden Eagle nesting occupancy at 9 of 25 territories within District 1.



View of two of the three nests that comprise the Franson Peak Golden Eagle Breeding Territory (one on the cliff face and the second in a large Douglas-fir tree).

Hells Canyon Bighorn Sheep: District Biologist Wik, Assistant District Biologist Vekasy, Technician Lowe, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) Biologist Cassirer spent a second day attempting to ground classify every sheep in the Asotin herd. This second attempt was focused on the ewes and lambs to determine whether we could improve on last week’s count. During the survey we counted 29 ewes and 9 lambs, the same as last week. We are still missing a number of lambs that were eartagged during the February capture. We are unsure whether these are still in the population. Vekasy joined an IDFG biologist in recovery of a bighorn ram. It appeared that the ram likely fell into a narrow canyon, died and was scavenged there.

Wildlife Areas



Asotin Creek WA – Med Sage Draw Controlled Burning: Biologist Woodall, Tech Meisner, and a Washington State University (WSU) student volunteer burned approximately 30 acres of decadent grass and weedy vegetation off of Meyers Ridge in an area known as Med Sage Draw. We have been fighting this Class-A noxious weed for a number of years now and have thrown multiple control measures, such as burning and spraying herbicide, at it and have reduced its numbers over the years.

Burning Med Sage Draw

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wolf Conservation and Management

Nothing to report.

Wildlife Management

Northern Leopard Frog – Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei managed a five-person volunteer search effort for Northern Leopard Frog egg masses. The intent of this effort was to determine the expected “catch per unit effort” for egg masses for planning purposes for future reintroduction efforts. Egg mass searches have been attempted in the past but they’ve been mostly unsuccessful. Efforts were focused on unproductive “sink” areas where leopard frogs historically breed (as evidenced by call chorus) but presumably do not reach metamorphosis (as evidenced by lack of metamorphs) due to depredation by fish as tadpoles. This area would likely be the best location to remove leopard frog egg masses if it is determined to be an appropriate action in the future.

Piscivorous Water birds – Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger began drawdown of cell 7 (outlet cell) of the Frenchmen Ponds project. The purpose of this effort is to concentrate fish and evaluate the feasibility of feeding Caspian terns to reduce impacts on Columbia River Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed salmonids (particularly steelhead). Our makeshift fish screen initially had to be cleaned daily until the waters between our debris fence and the water control structure became relatively clean. Once that occurred, water flowed well. Additionally, we deployed four trail cameras and began collecting video of piscivorous water bird use. Lastly,

we documented piscivorous water bird use during our site visits and recorded band readings from 23 individuals. Most Caspian terns were observed loafing on mudflats of the cell 123 complex and cell 5. Duvuvuei and Finger began coordination with Oregon State University (OSU) and RealTime Research to share findings and learn where these individuals were banded. Most were banded at Goose Island within the past few years, but one was banded at Crescent Island.



Caspian terns loaf and forage at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area – Photo by O. Duvuvuei.

Wildlife Areas

North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team – On Monday, April 14 the burn team conducted a test fire in the Mill 2 Burn Unit on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, but due to low relative and strong winds putting us at the high end of the prescription, Burn Boss Dunn ordered the test fire extinguished and the burn postponed. The team then constructed a fire line to create a more manageable sub-unit within Mill 2. On Wednesday the burn team helped Sinlahekin Assistant Manager Wehmeyer and Technician Boulger burn residual material



Prescribed burns at agricultural fields on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Ray Guse.

off nine agricultural fields to aide future tillage. Wehmeyer worked as a Type 3 Burn Boss Trainee. Once qualified he will be able to lead low complexity burns such as pile burning and where fuels outside of unit boundaries are not expected to carry a spreading fire as determined by a comprehensive complexity analysis and detailed prescription. On Thursday the team began burning the Mill 2 Unit by black-lining the northwestern block of the unit. On Friday they were able to finish the 24 acre sub-unit and secure it for the weekend. Burn Team Leader Mitchell patrolled the unit Saturday to ensure it remains contained, and Sunday Volunteer Brett did the same. Since March 20 the team has burned a total of 534 acres on the Sinlahekin and Sherman Creek wildlife areas.

Castle Lake Peat Fire Columbia Basin – Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fire Manager Dave Brown reported a peat fire smoldering in the old Castle Lake lakebed on DNR and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands near Deep Lake in Sun Lakes State Park. According to locals, the fire started either in the spring or fall of 2013. The fire is currently confined to the lakebed, totaling 27.9 acres, approximately 60% of which is WDFW owned land. DNR estimates approximately \$154,000 to extinguish the fire.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Jim searched 3 leks on Scotch Creek this week. We had attendance of 14 on Scotch Creek, 4 on Happy Hill, and 3 on Boyce. This represents a slight increase from the earlier first round counts, however, slightly lower than in 2013. For comparison, the Scotch Creek basin in 2013 we counted a total of 25 birds on 3 leks, and in 2014, a total of 21 birds on the same 3 leks.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Surveys: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen finished up spring deer surveys in Population Management Unit (PMU) 21. We classified over 3,100 mule deer and observed fawn:adult ratios of 45:100. This translates into an estimated over-winter fawn survivorship of 38%, which is significantly below the 20-year average of 52%. We did see a few animals that appeared to exhibit signs of hair-loss syndrome, but as in years past, it was limited to a handful of individuals and does not appear to be affecting herd demographics.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Education and Outreach: Biologist Gallie coordinated two trips with the Wenatchee Skills Source Center and Washington State University (WSU) Extension Office to take students (12) out on work days on WDFW projects. Students are paid a wage and work with local resource agencies to provide them skills in this field while they complete their GED and eventually the goal of getting jobs in this field. Students came along on pygmy rabbit captures and golden eagle

nest observations. Not only did the students provide lots of help, they enjoyed the experience very much.



Left: *Biologist Gallie and a student captured pygmy rabbit kits within the breeding enclosure on Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area. Right:* *Captured pygmy rabbit kit (65 grams).*



Students doing their golden eagle impression while on a nest watch.

Recreational Opportunities: This is also a great time of year to observe herptiles. Amphibian breeding activity is peaking at lower elevation wetlands with adults, egg masses, and even tadpoles visible. Snakes are getting active and the more cold-tolerant species are already moving away from hibernacula.



Left: *Pacific chorus frog* egg masses. **Right:** *Columbia spotted frog* egg masses. Photos by Scott Fitkin



Above: *Western Racer*. **Below:** *Northern Pacific Rattlesnake*. Photos by Scott Fitkin



Private Lands/Access

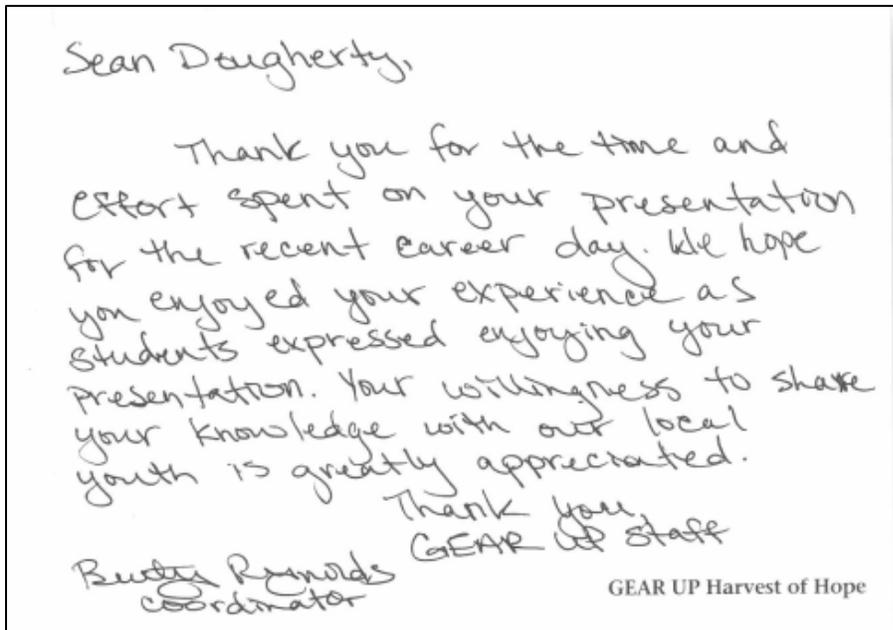
Tonasket Outreach School Sinlahekin

Hike: Manager Haug led an interpretive hike with the Outreach students from the Tonasket School district. The focus of the hike was on riparian habitats and the different species that inhabit them. The students were very grateful for the experience and enjoyed the tree plantings along the way

Presentations: On March 27, 2014 Biologist Dougherty was an invited speaker for career day hosted by the Washington State University GEAR UP program. The program provides middle school students, age 12-14, insight and direction for choosing a career. Apparently, Biologist Dougherty’s presentation detailing the rigors of field work and the constraints of budgets all coupled with the sometimes impoverished lifestyle most wildlife biologists lead at some point during their careers was well received. And thus has successfully inspired at least some to carry on the tradition. Thankfully, we love what we do!



Students explored riparian habitats and the different species that inhabit them. Photo by Justin Haug



The ‘Thank You’ card from the GEAR UP coordinator.

Wildlife Scenes:



Left: Yellow-rumped warbler (Audubon variety). Right: Group of mule deer.



Left: Spotted towhee. Right: American kestrel. Below: Tree swallows.



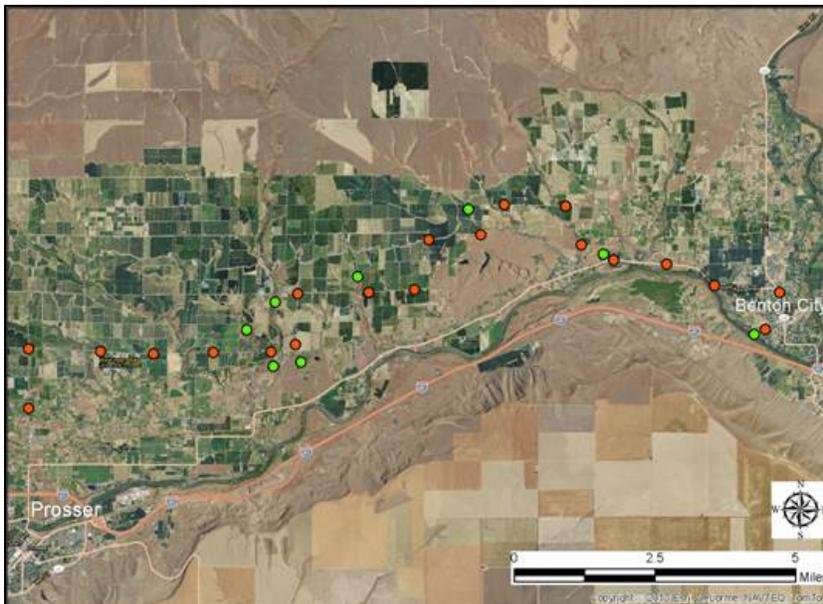


Left: *Red-napped sapsucker* male. Right: *Downy woodpecker* male.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Mourning Doves: Biologist Gregory prepared for the upcoming U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) sponsored workshop next week in Sacramento. The workshop will involve training in new survey methods for doves that involves distance sampling. In preparation for the workshop it was necessary to add some off road points to the current survey route that previously consisted of only on road survey stations.

A map of the District 4 mourning dove survey route includes points depicting on road (red) stations and new proposed off road (green) stations.

Sage Grouse: Biologist Stutzman spoke with the Yakima Training Center's (YTC) Kevin White about sage grouse populations and distribution on the installation. Stutzman ultimately received sage grouse location data for lands adjacent to YTC from Kevin to guide private lands conservation efforts around the training center.

Golden Eagles: Assistant District Biologist Moore entered data for the second round of occupancy surveys and surveyed a few priority three sites. The Umtanum territory has an incubating adult on the cliff nest just above the creek.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: The spring turkey season opened on Tuesday this week, with moderate pressure (four camps in the N. Fk. Tarpiscan). Enforcement staff checked two birds harvested Saturday.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff worked the spring litter pick-up on the wildlife area: Acting Regional Wildlife Program Manager McCorquodale and Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Taylor worked the north end of the Durr Road, along with Enforcement Officer Peterson. The north end effort was organized by the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club and their work to maintain this effort year after year is much appreciated. Sixty volunteers participated. Litter volume this year was less than last year. Casey worked the south end of the Durr Road where 40 volunteers participated. We think increased enforcement presence has likely contributed to less trash dumping. We also have more individuals cleaning up throughout the year.



Durr Road Cleanup, Saturday, April 19.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and HQ staff Posner attended the first meeting of the revised LT Murray Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC). All 10 members attended, in addition to other agency's staff and public attendees. We had good discussion of potential new projects and issues of concern.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Chelan County Sherriff's Office deputies and WDFW Enforcement staff continue to monitor the Wanapum Reservoir shoreline due to concerns of exposed cultural resources and public safety. County deputies and wildlife agents are taking shifts at the Colockum Yoyo Rock boat launch and at the end of Tarpiscan Road.

Hazard Tree Removal – Colockum Wildlife Area: Pete and John joined Doug Kuehn, Paul Dahmer, Richard Tveten and Clay Sprague for a tour on the Colockum to look at some of the timber burned by the Colockum-Tarps Fire and the possibility of salvaging some of it as part of an expanded hazard tree removal project.



Colockum Wildlife Area

Roads: Pete and John drove Colockum roads and looked at spring road conditions. We have drainage issues on some roads that need to be addressed. We should consider closing some of these roads temporarily in the spring to prevent road damage, especially on roads that just received maintenance work last fall. Pete continues to coordinate with engineering to schedule a site visit to Stray Gulch for a potential road building project.

Muddy spring road conditions on the Colockum Wildlife Area.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Access Manager Garcia worked on installing entrance signs at King Horn Slough, dropped off access truck 05980M for PM service and finished entrance signs at King Horn Slough.



New entrance sign at King Horn Slough.

Volunteer Clean-up – Sunnyside Wildlife Area: On Saturday Access Manager Garcia and his assistant worked at MP 8 and MP 10 with CWU volunteers for Earth week. We had 21 volunteers at MP 8, picking up trash, brushed and cleaned the trail, and pulled weeds. We had 26 volunteers at MP 10. They also picked up trash and brushed the entrance. Both trucks and trailers were full of tires, trash, weeds, and yard waste.



Left: *Earth Day Volunteers helping out the access crew on Saturday. Right:* *Full trucks and trailers at the end of the day.*

Wildlife Management

Landowner Contacts – Wildlife Conflict: Several contacts and visits to the McMeans’ property and surrounding area were made by Leuck and Wetzel on numerous days this week. A meeting with Ms. McMeans and Acting Regional Wildlife Program Manager McCorquodale is scheduled for Wednesday, April 23. They also spent three days repairing fences damaged by elk in Reecer Creek and Dry Creek.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Management

Intern Training – District 8: Assistant District Biologist Moore worked with Bighorn Sheep Section Lead Rich Harris and District Biologist Jeff Bernatowicz to train two Central Washington University interns. The Umtanum/Selah Butte Lamb Survival Study interns will be monitoring lambing and lamb survival of VHF collared ewes in the Yakima Canyon. This information will be used to monitor the herd’s annual productivity.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



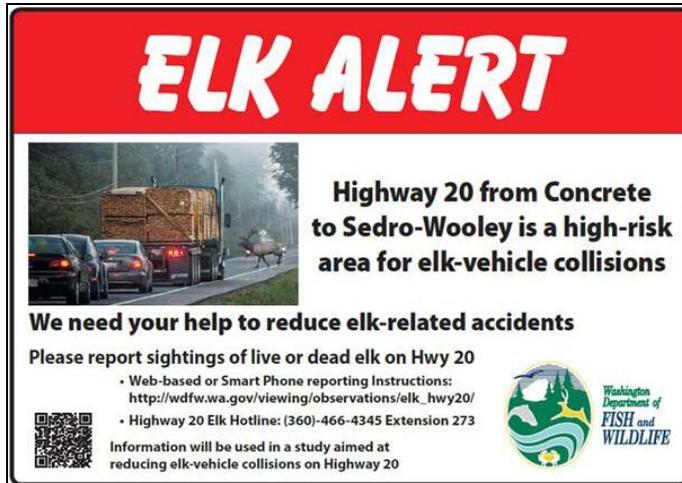
Hozomeen Wolf Cameras: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn and a biologist from the National Park Service retrieved 10 of 13 cameras that had been out all winter in the area north and east of Ross Lake. No images of wolves were found on the cameras but several sets of tracks on trails and in the drawdown suggested large canids. The three remaining cameras are in promising areas for wolves and will be retrieved when snow conditions permit. The cameras revealed that it was an unusual winter as the area was mostly snow free until February. Lower than usual numbers of deer on cameras at lower elevations suggest that predators and prey were less concentrated in the area than usual. The cameras did record lot of cougars. Here is a link to a video clip: <\\ssv.wa.lcl\dfw files\Reg4-LCNR\30Day\DeBruyn\Cougar on Wolf scent in drawdown.AVI>.

Biologist Paul DeBruyn observed a large carnivore track in the snow.

Black-tailed Deer Monitoring: Biologist Smith attended a meeting in Olympia to discuss black-tailed deer population monitoring. Topics discussed included where we have been, the limitations and challenges of black-tail monitoring, and potential paths forward.

Low Elevation Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra contacted the new Base CIO to arrange a meet and greet to discuss access and explain the survey. A visit is planned for next week. Pika survey forms were modified to collect additional field data.

Purple Martin Outreach and Citizen Stewardship: Biologist Anderson worked with volunteer martin stewards to review a draft collaborative poster that will be presented at the upcoming Salish Sea Conference at the end of April. The poster describes long-term citizen stewardship and martin nest site management since the 1990s, provides justification for more coordinated and collaborative efforts, and also mentions WDFW volunteer electronic processes and reporting options that are hopeful to support better retention and providing ease of tracking nest sites for such citizen stewardship efforts. A big thanks to District 11 Biologists Tirhi and Schmidt due to their long-term efforts with many of the same martin stewards (often assisting or leading District 12 survey efforts) as well as Wildlife Biologist Blatz with the Data Management group for providing data on King County martins over the past 20-plus years.



ELK ALERT

Highway 20 from Concrete to Sedro-Wooley is a high-risk area for elk-vehicle collisions

We need your help to reduce elk-related accidents

Please report sightings of live or dead elk on Hwy 20

- Web-based or Smart Phone reporting Instructions: http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/elk_hwy20/
- Highway 20 Elk Hotline: (360)-466-4345 Extension 273

Information will be used in a study aimed at reducing elk-vehicle collisions on Highway 20



Highway 20 Elk Crossing: Biologist DeBruyn worked with the Web Development Group to make a poster warning motorists using State Highway 20 about the elk/vehicle collision hazard. Highway 20 is the detour of Highway 530 around the Oso landslide and has been experiencing a high volume of traffic. Many new users of the highway may be naïve as to the hazard.

The poster includes a QR code allowing smartphone users to link with our app.

Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGSN) surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra joined District Biologist Milner in a tour of the San Juan Island Land Bank properties and to check cover boards deployed for Sharp tailed snakes on these sites last summer. No snakes were observed on this visit. Additional cover boards were left with Land Bank Stewards for deployment to additional sites around the island. Additional visits to San Juan and Orcas Islands are scheduled this spring. We also met with a trainer with Conservation Canines who will be using a trained scent dog to survey larger areas for Sharp tailed snakes. These dogs have been increasingly used to survey for



Sharp tailed snake cover board: *Shingles are placed near rocky outcrops or decaying wood in oak savannah openings to create an easily accessible location to check for snakes without damaging the native structure of the site.*

everything from Killer Whale scat to Spotted Owl pellets and we look forward to having this additional help to increase our survey areas.

Amphibian Egg Mass Identification and Documentation Assistance – Citizen Science: Biologist Anderson provided detailed instruction to Woodland Park Zoo citizen amphibian monitoring participants of how to ensure observations are entered correctly into the WDFW

Wildlife Observation site, how to filter their specific data, how to compile multiple data observations at the same site, and assist with any identification questions from participants.



Golden Eagle Activity: Biologist Anderson received a note from Muckleshoot Tribal biologists documenting both a subadult and adult golden eagle feeding at carcass sites in District 12 and 11. Given the time of year, it is plausible that a rare territory is in the vicinity of specifically the adult siting. Communication with tribal biologists, State Raptor Scientist Watson, and District 11 Biologist Tirhi will continue in hopes of documenting more activity and perhaps a nesting area.

A subadult and adult golden eagle feed at a carcass site in east King County –
Photo courtesy of Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.

State Take Authorization: Biologist Anderson worked with Seattle City Light (SCL) to provide for their state required wildlife take authorization and guidance. Anderson and SCL deposited an electrocuted osprey to Burke Museum. The bird had been nesting on light ballast. The bird was banded in 2003 in Tulalip, WA.

Common Loon Monitoring: Biologist Smith, while on personal time recreating on the Snoqualmie Tree Farm over the weekend, noted that two loons were in and around the Calligan nesting platform. Follow-up visits for band confirmation on individuals and ongoing status will occur throughout the season.

Wildlife Areas

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a letter to the project partner (The Wild Fish Conservancy) that provides details on WDFW contributions to the project that can be used to document matching funds for grants awarded to the project.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with two volunteers to continue spreading mulch on the access roads within the unit. The mulch was donated by Kemp West and a tractor and loader was donated by one of the volunteers for the task. Approximately 150 truckloads of free mulch have been placed on the access roads so far.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss planting plans for the Cherry Valley and Stillwater units. Corn and barley will be planted at the two units with 1/3 of the crop retained for wildlife forage and cover. Last season, approximately 30 acres of grain was planted. This season, an additional 20 acres is planned for Cherry Valley and 42 acres at the Stillwater Unit. Additionally, Sound Salmon Solutions

continued with restoration planting at the Waterwheel Creek Project. Approximately 1,000 livestock stakes were planted between the mouth of the Creek and the steel bridge.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that approximately 400 cow/calf pairs arrived on the unit last week. The cattle will be grazing the middle and west lobe portions of the unit, focusing on reed canary grass control. Additionally, Sno-Valley Farms began initial soil preparation on approximately 90 acres on the east lobe of the unit. Grain crops will be planted and a portion will provide forage and cover for waterfowl and wildlife.

Lake Terrell and Intalco Wood Duck Boxes: Natural Resource Tech Deyo checked wood duck boxes on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units.

Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) Planting Project: Manager Kessler coordinated with managers from NSEA who held a tree and shrub planting project along the Nooksack River. The trees were planted along the new dike trail that the Whatcom County Parks department built from Main Street in Ferndale, past the WDFW Nooksack River access, and ending at Hovander Park.

Clogged Water Control Cleanout: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleaned out a water control on the Lake Terrell Unit that had been clogged up by beavers. Logs, branches, grass and mud were removed from around and within the water control.

Lake Terrell Barley Fields Prep: Natural Resource Tech Deyo worked the barley fields for the first time this season. Due to his work clearing drainage ditches, the fields have drained very well, which has made it possible to disk the fields earlier than usual.

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

Wildlife Management

Draft Wildlife Conflict Procedure: Biologists Anderson and Smith provided comments regarding proposed Wildlife Specialist roles and procedure, Customer Service scenario script, and bear depredation scope of procedure.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit (Welts) Access Facility Funding: Projects Coordinator Brokaw entered grant application materials onto an online project database housed by the Recreation and Conservation Office and worked with the Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) to edit the project design and graphics. The project that involves creating a parking area and vehicle turn-around pad to accommodate a portable restroom on the Samish River Unit in the Skagit Wildlife Area.

Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project: Ducks Unlimited completed a draft of the project design and submitted it to WDFW for review. The design involves installation of water control

structures in drainage ditches to allow management flexibility for the property to improve waterfowl hunting opportunity. Pending review of the design, WDFW will host a meeting to present the design to the public.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove continued field preparations for agricultural enhancements on the Island Unit. Areas in six fields have been disked. Cosgrove and Meis worked in two fields to downed alder trees that had fallen into cultivated areas.



Manager Rotton and NRT Cosgrove toured the Island Unit with Puget Sound Near shore Ecosystem Restoration Program (PSNERP) and Senator Maria Cantwell's staff. The Senator's staff was touring some of the sites listed on the PSNERP project list.

Field Tour of the Island Unit with Senator Cantwell's staff. Left to Right: Belinda Rotton (WDFW), Paul Wolfe (Senator Cantwell's office), Joe Downes (Senator Cantwell's office), Theresa Mitchell (WDFW), Brian Williams (WDFW), Jennifer Quan (WDFW), Sally Hintz (Senator Cantwell's office), Jay Krienitz (WDFW), Curran Cosgrove (WDFW). Not pictured: Richard Brocksmith, photographer (Skagit Watershed Council).

Manager Rotton continued to coordinate with permitting agencies about the Island Unit ditch cleaning project and discussed permitting needs for the leaking tide gate repair in the Barn field.

Agricultural enhancement program: Natural Resources Tech Cosgrove monitored field conditions on the Samish and Island units this week, both areas received heavy rains on Tuesday which could delay field prep and weed control activities.

Access Program: NRT Cosgrove assisted with the Lowland Lakes prep for the Fishing season opener by mowing access sites near Conway, including the Jensen Access on Skagit Bay, Lake 16 and Lake McMurray. Staff from the Access program in recent weeks has been involved with the Oso Slide recovery effort.

Community Outreach & Hunter Education – Update from Steve Dazey: Staff scheduled two Pre-Service Trainings (PST), one in Issaquah and one in the Skagit area, to certify new instructors. Skagit PST also will assist instructor Vincent who after scheduling class has encountered health issues. Steve also followed up with volunteers regarding Game Management

Unit (GMU) 410 survey. The projected completion date is April 22, 2014. Recruited new instructor and made contact for possible new venue in Sammamish at King County Sheriff's station. Staff also recruited new instructors to assist existing team at the Nile. Made contact with instructors who used to teach at Lynden Shotgun group to see if we can conduct classes there again. Staff activated seven On-line Skills Evaluations and one Traditional course and assisted instructor Dorati in updating his class offerings.

Lake Terrell Triploid Trout Plant: WDFW hatchery personnel planted 500 triploid trout in Lake Terrell. Word spread fast and the fishing pier and shoreline were busy with fishermen trying for the big fish.

Bass Fishing Tournament: The NW Bass Masters fishing club held a weekend bass fishing tournament at Lake Terrell. The fishing was tough due to very windy and rainy weather conditions.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Skagit Whatcom County Deer Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith received three more deer complaints in northern Whatcom County this week. All three are large commercial berry producers and have historically had deer damages to their crops throughout the summer months. Griffith will be meeting with them next week to discuss options.

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith spent time meeting and phone conferencing with landowners from Enumclaw, Green Valley, Snoqualmie Valley and Whidbey Island to discuss deer and elk damage to agricultural crops and residential property. Hazing ideas, fencing techniques and hunting strategies were discussed.

Nuisance Wildlife Assistance: Biologist Danilson provided technical assistance to a couple from Montana whose boat, which is currently moored in La Conner, had been damaged by river otters over the winter. Danilson later responded to a call from a Port of Skagit County representative who indicated that the river otter damage issue at the La Conner marina was much more comprehensive. Danilson provided a contact list of private wildlife control operators and specifics as to how to deal with river otter issues to both the boat owners and the Port representative.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP) Site and Equipment Management: Biologist Caldwell purchased herbicides for WQHP applications. Technician Otto retrofitted the Gator UTV with a new water pump and prepared the spray tanks for the 2014 season. Furthermore, he sprayed canary reed grass on approximately 10 acres at WQHP units.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto coordinated efforts to utilize Migratory Bird Enhancement funding in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties.

Skagit County Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith met with a property owner in Deming this week regarding a group of elk frequenting their property. The owner has been chasing the elk out nightly with little success. Griffith provided guidance and equipment to enhance the hazing efforts of the owner. Griffith worked with a local supplier to deliver elk fencing materials to a landowner in Birdsvew. This is the second complete material delivery in Skagit County. Material delivery for a third property in Rockport should be complete in the next week or two. In conjunction with the delivery of materials, Griffith is working with a Master Hunter Coordinator in attempts to get volunteer labor to assist these landowners with installation.



Elk fencing materials await installation by Master Hunters and landowners.



Spring Bear Hunter Verification: Biologist Caldwell preformed hunter contact and vehicle identification verifications throughout the week. This data was collected to insure that hunters could be contacted during and after the season. Hunters will be contacted if a violation occurs, to confirm harvest, and to collect harvest data.

Spring Bear Hunter Meeting: Biologist Caldwell met with several hunters and responded to many questions regarding Spring Bear Hunt access locations and tree damage identification. Biologist Caldwell confirmed locations and assisted hunters in locating areas with high frequency bear damage to improve their hunting success.

2013 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Sites Contract Payments – Follow-up: Biologist Caldwell conducted follow up efforts to ensure that two landowners in Region 4 received their landowner payments for 2013 Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant application scoring: Biologist Milner participated on the scoring panel for this year's ALEA grant applications. Fifty-seven grants were submitted. The committee discussed and scored each application. This week, final scores and recommendations for budget adjustments will be completed.

Osprey nest removal requests: Biologist Milner fielded two requests this week and continues to recommend that requests to remove raptor nests from man-made structures be centralized to one point of contact for the whole State.

2014 Marine Waters report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra commented on the segment concerning marine birds that Marine Bird Specialist Evenson is developing for the Puget Sound Partnerships's 2014 Marine Waters report.

Osprey Nest Removal Interview: Biologist Anderson provided information regarding state permitting, osprey nesting ecology, and overall assistance of WDFW to deal with safety and damage situations regarding osprey and other permanent nests of birds on built structures. The interview was specific to the recent osprey nest removed at Mercer Island High School.

Bobcat and River otter pelt sealing – Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species: Biologists Anderson and Smith, along with many thanks due to coordination assistance from Region 4 Customer Service, finished out the bobcat and river otter season pelt sealing requirement for hunters and trappers. Anderson and Smith sealed 25 animals in the last week, 19 of which in one afternoon. District 12 sealed 56 animals throughout the total season. This is in addition to the 73 animals sealed throughout Region 4 by Enforcement staff.

Pelts are scheduled to be sealed by biologists at Mill Creek and La Conner, in Region 4, once a month via phone scheduling with Customer Service. A few hunters and trappers made special arrangements with Anderson or Smith to have their pelts sealed outside of scheduling due to understandable circumstances. The requirement is due to the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species: <http://www.cites.org/eng>.

Assistance to City of Federal Way – Nesting Conflict: Biologist Anderson worked with city of Federal Way to provide guidance on Killdeer nesting ecology and recommendation to avoid disturbance of a nesting pair on a construction site. The pair will be avoided and within the next month or less, via business day monitoring, the crew will wait for eggs to hatch and commence work and exclusion in that area shortly after the young move off to discourage any multiple brooding by adults.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted response letters to comments received through the Skagit County Special Use permit process and responded to a request from the county to identify any known wells within the project vicinity. The next step in the Special Use permit process is a public hearing with the County Hearing Examiner.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm distributed a draft Wildlife Area Management Plan update to program managers and Wildlife Area Advisory Committee for review. The final plan is due April 30. The Wildlife Area Plan was last updated in 2012. Manager Boehm also met with three WDFW Master Hunters interested in volunteer opportunities within the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. With assistance from WDFW Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey, a number of work parties are being planned.

Wildlife Program staff at the Oso site: WDFW has assisted U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) service with taking depth readings to establish the end of the upstream slurry flow and the previous river channel. A multi-agency team has also transported Snohomish County Public Works' employees out to the Aquatic Excavator dredging the relief channel. That work is being performed by BCI Contractors out of Portland, OR. The FEMA personnel and National Guard have been ramping down and the Snohomish County Sheriff is taking the lead. There was one WDFW marshmaster in the field. The marshmaster was stationed with the pontoon excavator as a safety vehicle in case something happened.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove removed footbridge debris that had floated up from an old field crossing from Headquarters. With the assistance of volunteers they were able to remove the debris from the marsh and salvage the large materials from the bridge to create other footbridges for elsewhere on the wildlife area.

NRS Meis updated the draft of the Emergency Action Plan for the Skagit Wildlife Area. Manager Rotton completed and submitted updated safety review matrix to Regional Wildlife Program Manager Link and Olympia Safety staff. Manager Rotton coordinated with Department of Natural Resources for the contract to dispose of the red-flagged barge. Manager Rotton assisted Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard and Habitat Biologist Brian Williams with the installation of the data logger for water surface monitoring on Wiley Slough.

Samish Unit: Wildlife Area staff reviewed and prepared comments to the latest Ducks Unlimited design drawings for the wetland enhancement project.

Fir Island Farms: Staff sprayed weeds (poison hemlock, blackberry, Canada and bull thistle) on Leque Island, Samish and Fir Island Farms Reserve Unit. Cosgrove completed Herbicide Application Record sheets.

Whatcom Wildlife Area Management Plan Update: Manager Kessler worked on the 2014 Management Plan Update for the wildlife area. He also scheduled the next Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting and sent out invites to all the previous CAG members.

Private Lands/Access

Technician Staff: Technicians Otto will assist me in working with landowners on utilizing duck stamp money for the 2014 hunting season. He will also start applying materials (herbicides, fertilizer, etc.) at enhancing sites and planting food plots at designated locations.

GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Management

Regional Meeting: Region 4 staff attended a quarterly meeting at the Mill Creek office to listen to presentations from Director Anderson and Deputy Director Stohr on statewide agency issues, as well as a presentation on cougars from Research Scientist Kertson. After the region-wide meeting, Wildlife Program staff met with Wildlife Program Director Pamplin and Wildlife Program Assistant Director Schirato to discuss issues specific to the Wildlife Program.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) pesticide control recertification exams. Certification is required for application of restricted-use pesticides. Manager Boehm also attended the quarterly Regional Meeting in Mill Creek. Numerous upper level managers and directors provided details on current WDFW management issues, budgets, and program direction.

Biologist Caldwell Publication in Western Birds: Biologist Caldwell received notification of his publication through the quarterly Journal of Western Field Ornithologists, Western Birds, 45(1):71-80. The link to the publication abstract for interested parties is available at <https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/journal.php>.

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to be involved with discussions concerning the future of radio communications within the Program, as well as providing radio support to Program staff.

Procedure review: Assistant District Biologist Cyra reviewed the new version of the Wildlife Program aviation standard operating procedure and communicated with the Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program (PSAMP) crew on the changes.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Simcoe 2014: Biologist Anderson and Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met with WDFW staff and representatives from the Klickitat Conservation District and Western Pacific Timber to discuss a potential conservation project in the Simcoe Mountains of eastern Klickitat County. Plans are being put together for a cooperative land management strategy to protect fish and wildlife values along with a local forestry and grazing strategy. The area is a unique mix of pine/oak/grassland habitat that hosts a large diversity of fish and wildlife species and habitats.



Simcoe Site Visit

Western Pond Turtle Management: Biologists George, Holman and Hallock as well as Conflict Specialist McDonald all participated in this week's continuation of the 2014 study of western pond turtles at the Sondino site. Priorities for this year include continuing to evaluate the shell disease condition among the population, collecting specific individuals for veterinary biopsies related to the shell disease condition, capturing sufficient individuals to generate a population estimate for the Sondino site, collecting young for the head-starting program, and conducting bull-frog control. The capture effort currently involves 28 traps set in three of Sondino's primary water bodies.

Through the initial eight days of trap checks, 32 total captures have occurred comprised of 25 individual turtles. Additionally, two hatchling pond turtles have been captured by hand. Also, three bull frogs were captured in hoop traps and removed. Finally, one of the animals targeted for biopsy has been captured and transferred to the Oregon Zoo.

Public Meetings: WDFW Assistant Director Pamplin, Region 5 Director Norman, State Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield, and Regions 5 and 6 Wildlife Program Managers Jonker and Cope hosted two public meetings (one in Vancouver and one in Chehalis). The Vancouver meeting was attended by approximately 20 people and the Chehalis meeting was attended by Representative Orcutt and approximately 90 people. Following a presentation of results to date

on WDFW's hoof disease diagnostic investigation, the remainder of the meeting provided an opportunity for Questions and Answers on a variety of topics related to hoof disease in elk in Southwest Washington.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Fence Repair: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis Rich began replacing posts on both sides of a gate in the fenceline along Hill Road, on the Hatchery Unit. This gate has been in disrepair for several years and when cattle are driven up or down Hill Road, they stray onto the WDFW fields. This year, with an agricultural lease in place, we have winter wheat growing in the fields on the south side of Spring Creek. The fence has needed work for years and with the fields in production, this repair job is a high priority for protection of the agricultural lease.

Road Gates on the Soda Springs Road System: On the evening of April 14, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven opened the road gates on Anderson Road, Old Headquarters Road, and the South Breaks Road in time for turkey hunting season. Van Leuven also removed many rocks from the steep section of Old Headquarters Road to improve public safety on this road following the lifting of the seasonal road closure.

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

Private Lands/Access

Access sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes picked up and hauled 340 pounds of trash as well as a sectional couch and a truckload of junk that was dumped on the Vancouver Lake Access site. Many reader boards had been vandalized at several sites and had to be cleaned and have missing signs replaced. All the Klickitat Access site holding tanks were pumped on Klickitat River. However, an estimated 2,000-25,000 gallons of cans, bottles, etc. remain in the tanks, so a vacator truck to clean the debris will have to come out of Portland.



Left: Vancouver Lake garbage dumping. Right: Holding tank pumping.

Public Access: Conflict Specialist McDonald performed turkey hunter outreach on Hancock Timberlands in Klickitat County. Handouts with rules for recreating on Hancock land and a Feel

Free to Hunt agreement area maps were given to hunters and placed on windshields of parked vehicles. All hunters contacted appreciated being given a map. Several of the hunters had already completed their turkey harvest.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict: Conflict Specialist McDonald placed three-foot long strips of Mylar on fence posts and trees in an attempt to deter elk from feeding on an Appleton area wheat field. The farmer/rancher has a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) with WDFW and is in the process of trying several preventative measures.

Deterrents: Conflict Specialist McDonald checked and repaired the turbo-fladry fencing installed around a dairy's hay field several weeks ago. Two sections of fladry were pulled down again, insulators were broken off a t-post, and clumps of elk fur were on the ground nearby. Despite the needed repairs, the fladry fence does appear to be working as the grass inside the fladry is much longer inside than outside.



Grass inside (left) and outside (right) the fladry fence.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Hoenes and Sundstrom met with Seasonal Biologists Stephanie Doorly and Jennifer Hahn who began on Wednesday and will be assisting with snowy plover monitoring and recovery efforts. Sundstrom gave them a brief tour of the Midway Beach

location then met with them and USDA APHIS Wildlife Specialists Lev and Craig at Leadbetter for introductions and a brief tour of the Long Beach Peninsula snowy plover location.

Biologist Michaelis conducted a snowy plover survey at Midway Beach and observed a total of seven birds. One female was displaying nesting behavior, but a nest could not be located due to the sand being too wet for track impressions. Biologists Doorly and Hahn also observed 11 snowy plovers during their visit to Leadbetter Point, but did not observe any breeding behavior. Given the behavior observed and documented by WDFW biologists, it does not appear that snowy plovers have begun to actively nest.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) – Sequim Site: Biologist Ament conducted her third survey of the season at the site near Sequim on April 15, 2014. There was sunshine and shadows at the start of the survey. The temperature ranged from 53 to 54 degrees. There was a very light breeze that got a little stronger and cooler during the survey. Unfortunately, weather conditions deteriorated mid-way during the survey. It became cloudy and there was minimal to no shadows present. A total of 406 TCBs were counted during the survey. Adult butterflies were observed on each of the 23 sections on the route. A few larvae were still observed along the survey area. Private Lands Biologist Ivan Stocker reported a count of three TCB's during his count on April 17, 2014. Weather conditions for his survey were not reported. Surveys will continue this week.



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (TCB) larvae feed on Plantago.



Left: TCB larvae basking on a shotshell wad. Right: First observed TCB of the 2014 season.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) – West of Port Angeles Site: Biologist McMillan worked at setting up transects at one of the survey sites west of Port Angeles. Twenty segments of 25 meters each were marked in the field; GPS fixes and tracks were recorded. The weather included short durations of sunshine; temperatures were constantly over 60 degrees F and calm to B-2 conditions, but the clouds were moving through and blocking sunshine a majority of the time.



Lots of Sara's Orangetip butterflies were observed flying when the sun broke through the clouds, but zero Taylor's checkerspot butterflies were observed on April 18, 2014.



While setting-up transect segments, with sunshine fleeting throughout the day, butterflies were observed flying when the sun broke through the clouds, April 18, 2014.

Harbor Seal Tagging: Bio Murphie assisted the Marine Mammal Investigations Unit of WDFW with attempts to catch and tag 12 harbor seals in the Bremerton area this week. Two adult male seals were captured by hand off of their rocky haul-out sites near Bainbridge Island and at Colvos Rocks. The capture technique essentially involves a controlled landing by boat onto the rocks followed by either a sneak and grab or a more robust scramble over the rocks in an attempt to capture a seal using a modified salmon landing net. Seals were temporarily held in individual nets for processing, which included measuring weight and length, collecting a blood sample, and tagging with a small computer that records location and dive behavior data (depth and duration of dives), before being released on-site. These computers are temporarily affixed to the seal and will drop-off during the next molting period.

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

Wildlife Management

Black-Tailed Deer: Region 6 wildlife biologists attended a meeting to discuss the progress Research Scientist Rice has made with regard to developing a model that projects the size of black-tailed deer populations using data collected through our harvest reports (e.g., tooth data, harvest estimates, hunter effort, etc.). Also in attendance included program and division managers, research scientists, statisticians, in addition to Regional Wildlife Program managers and biologists from Regions 5. Overall, Research Scientist Rice gave an excellent presentation and it appears he has made some progress that is quite promising. WDFW is seeking alternative ways to monitor trends in black-tailed deer populations because the traditional approach of conducting aerial surveys to estimate population size, age ratios, and sex ratios is not conducive for black-tails because of their secretive behavior and because they occupy densely vegetated habitats, which severely limits their detectability.

Wildlife Conflict Fence Repair – Raspberry Farm: Biologist Harris attended a fence repair project with seven Master Hunters (MHs). The project was scheduled to start at 0900. Harris showed up at 0845 and found most the MHs busy repairing the fence. Both the landowner and Harris expected the fence repair to take most of day. The MHs proved them wrong. In a little over three hours they had fixed everything the landowner had hoped to fix. There are other portions of the fence that could use some repairing, but the landowner was out of materials. The landowner was overjoyed that her fence was fixed. This project fell into the area where Wildlife Conflict and Private Lands overlap. Biologist Harris first started working on the property to address elk problems the lessee was having. While checking the property for elk use he noticed that deer were starting to find ways through the fence protecting the commercial raspberry patch. Knowing this was a future conflict issue in the works he talked to the landowner and offered MH help. He reached out to the MHs that drew a designated permit and were assigned to hunt in the Willapa Valley. The landowner was very happy to see hunters who harvested elk on their property return to help. The landowners and the lessee have a very liberal access rule. Basically just ask and they will allow you to fish or hunt along the river on their property. During the summer, it was common to see kids playing in the Willapa River and occasionally some teens fishing. As hunting, salmon and steelhead seasons arrived the demographics changed. Harris informed the landowner the help was provided not just to prevent another wildlife conflict or for

being so willing to allow MH access for damage control. We see the level of public access they are offering and this is just our way of saying thank you.

Private Lands/Access

Operation Clean Sweep – Green Diamond: Green Diamond Security staff notified Biologist Harris that their annual cleanup was scheduled for the Saturday, April 19. They requested help in gathering volunteers for this event. While it was short notice he made the effort by reaching out to Master Hunters (MHs) in Region 6 and adjoining counties. A total of 16 MHs showed up to help. Since Harris had another MH project, he was unable to attend. One MH offered to organize and keep track of MHs attending. He reported that they filled three 20' dumpsters with about 20 truckloads. Green Diamond staff seemed more than pleased with their efforts. There was approximately eight other volunteers as well. Considering that it was short notice, turkey season, and Easter weekend this showing by MHs is amazing. Even more impressive was that they outnumbered the other volunteers even though they had very short notice.