

Wildlife Program

Week of November 24-30, 2014

SCIENCE DIVISION

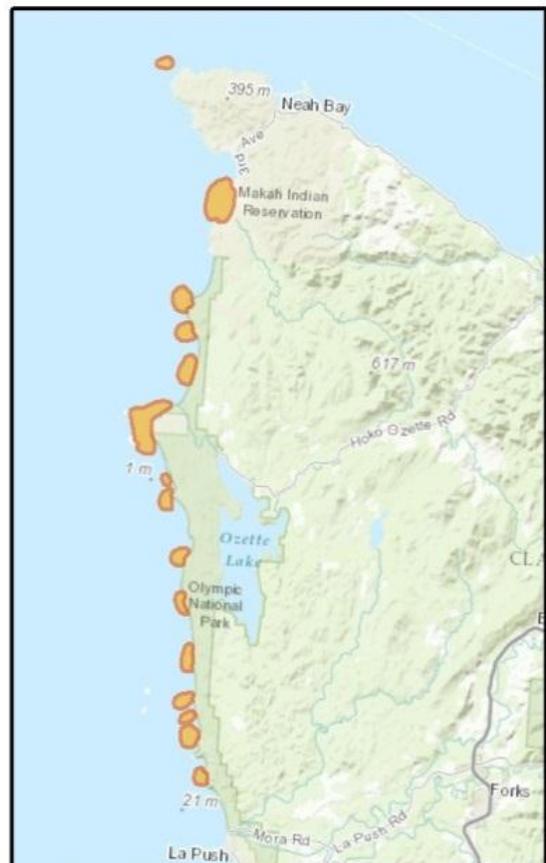
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Agency Strategic Objectives

- A. The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.
- B. Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles, established in the Conservation Initiative.
- C. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Marine Spatial Planning: This project addresses components of all three agency objectives in Goal 1.

Staff is making progress on compiling and updating several wildlife data layers along the outer coast as part of the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) project. Key wildlife datasets that we are compiling include seabird colonies, marine mammal haul-out sites, at-sea seabird/marine mammal surveys, Sea Otter concentrations, Snowy Plover and Streaked Horned Lark breeding sites, and seabird diversity hotspots (data from published research). As part of this effort, Steve Jeffries, Lori Salzer, & Terry Johnson collaborated to update the WDFW Northern Sea Otter resource information for the Washington outer coast. They created **summer concentration polygons** based primarily on surveys conducted by Steve Jeffries during July 2012 & 2013 (see image to the right). The data is now available through PHS on the web. We also had a webinar meeting with the MSP Science Panel to present our progress to date and to explore our methods and thinking of how we are going about identifying ecologically important areas. Basically, we are trying to adapt the process we used for the WGA Crucial Habitat mapping project as a framework for combining and ranking areas of importance. The Science Panel presentation went well and there was good discussion and feedback on our approach. We hope to have our first draft of EIAs by the end of December to review with the Panel and Tribal Technical staff.



- B. Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles, established in the Conservation Initiative.

Kristin Mansfield is a coauthor of a recently published paper on elk hoof disease:

Clegg, S.R., K.G. Mansfield, K. Newbrook, L. E. Sullivan, R. W. Blowey, S. D. Carter, N. J. Evans. 2014. Isolation of digital dermatitis treponemes from hoof lesions in wild North American elk (*Cervus elaphus*) in Washington State, USA. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* in press.

Abstract:

Since 2008, a large increase in the numbers of cases of lameness have been seen in wild North American elk (*Cervus elaphus*) from Washington State, USA. The most recent cases manifest as foot lesions similar both clinically and pathologically with those seen in digital dermatitis (DD) in cattle and sheep, a disease with a bacterial aetiopathogenesis. To determine whether the same bacteria considered responsible for DD are associated with elk lameness, lesion samples were subjected to bacterial isolation studies and PCR assays for three phylogroups of relevant DD treponemes. The DD treponemes were isolated from lesional tissues, but not from control feet or other areas of the diseased foot (including coronary band, or interdigital space), suggesting that the bacteria are strongly associated with DD lesions and may therefore be causal. In addition, PCR analysis revealed that all three unique DD treponeme phylotypes were found in elk hoof disease and in 23% of samples, all 3 DD-associated treponemes were present in lesions. Sequence analysis of the 16S rRNA gene showed that the elk lesion treponemes were phylogenetically almost identical to those isolated from cattle and sheep DD lesions. The isolates were particularly similar to two of the three culturable DD treponeme phylotypes; specifically the *Treponema medium*/*Treponema vincentii*-like and *Treponema phagedenis*-like DD spirochetes. The third treponeme culturable phylogroup (*Treponema pedis*), although detected by PCR, was not isolated. This is the first report describing isolation of DD treponemes from a wildlife host, suggesting that the disease may be evolving to include a wider spectrum of cloven hoofed animals.

- C. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Gail Olson is a coauthor of a recently published paper on Northern Spotted Owls:

Sovern, S.G, E.D. Forsman, G.S. Olson, B.L. Biswell, M. Taylor, and R.G. Anthony. 2014. Barred owls and landscape attributes influence territory occupancy of northern spotted owls. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 78: 1436-1443.

Abstract:

We used multi-season occupancy analyses to model 2 fates of northern spotted owl territories in relation to habitat amount, habitat fragmentation, and the presence of barred owls in Washington State, USA, 1989–2005. Local colonization is the probability a territory unoccupied by a spotted owl in year i would be occupied in year $i+1$, and local extinction is the probability a territory that

was occupied by a spotted owl in year i would be unoccupied in year $i+1$. We found a negative relationship between local extinction probability and amount of late-seral forest edge. We found a negative relationship between colonization probability and the number of late-seral forest patches (higher fragmentation), and a negative relationship between colonization probability and the amount of non-habitat within 600m of a spotted owl territory center (Akaike weight¹/0.59). The presence of barred owls was positively related to extinction probability and negatively related to detection probability of spotted owls. The negative relationship between presence of barred owls and detectability of spotted owls indicated that spotted owls could be modifying their calling behavior in the presence of barred owls. The positive relationship between barred owl detections and local extinction probability suggests that because of competition with barred owls, spotted owls are being displaced.

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

Agency Strategic Objectives

Achieve operational excellence through effective business processes, workload management, and investments in technology.

Aaron Hughes, a member of the WDFW IT staff, was part of a panel at the Annual AWS conference and discussed our use of Amazon Web Services to save money over traditional hardware implementations. His talk/interview highlights many of the Wildlife Program systems that Andy Duff and staff have been instrumental in developing, like the system the Agency uses for ecological integrity monitoring, sharing wolf data, capturing hoof disease observations, incidental wildlife obs, etc. See the link below.

<http://ewallstreeter.com/washington-state-department-of-fish-and-wildlife-uses-aws-to-save-taxpayers-money-reinvent-8713/>

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan conducted a survey of shorebirds on Long Beach (from North Head to the tip of Leadbetter Point). This was part of a flyway-scale effort organized by Point Blue Conservation Science (PBCS) to monitor shorebirds along the Pacific coast. Joe has provided advice to PBCS during the design and organization of surveys in coastal Washington. Joe's tallies included Snowy Plover (8), Semipalmated Plover (80), Black-bellied Plover (819), Dunlin (36,804), Western Sandpiper (504), Least Sandpiper (1,815), Long-billed Dowitcher (1), and Sanderling (2,348). Counts were typical for this location in winter, except for the large number of Least Sandpipers.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Huckleberry Pack Summer 2014 Debrief: Region 1 Conflict Specialists and Private Lands Biologists participated in the Huckleberry debriefing to learn from this past summer's activities. Several good discussions were had regarding how to make things better for this upcoming year.

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

Wildlife Areas

SCWA Pheasant Release: The final pheasant release of the season was made at Sherman Creek WLA this week. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer makes these mid-season releases at dusk to avoid any safety issues with hunters on site. Assistance was provided by Sherman Creek Hatchery Manager Mitch Combs and four volunteers, including off-duty Enforcement Officer Nick Parkert and his daughter, Josie.



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



Burning tumble weeds

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict: Natural Resource Worker (NRW) Wade continued to monitor the deer in the town of Pomeroy. Wade lined up two hunters for next week to fill permits within the city limits. Wade also responded to calls from residents experiencing extensive damage to the vegetation around their homes.

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek WA – Signs: Bio Woodall and Tech Steveson updated both the Kiosks on Meyer's Ridge and the Rockpile

Access Sites with new plexi-glass, maps, and other pertinent materials. They hung new signs, burned tumble weeds when they would burn, or pulled tumble weeds when they would not burn. They started rolling up old decrepit fence at the Rockpile area and got about a 1/3 of it complete.



Meyer's Ridge Kiosk



Rockpile Kiosk

REGION 2

WOLVES: Nothing to report

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

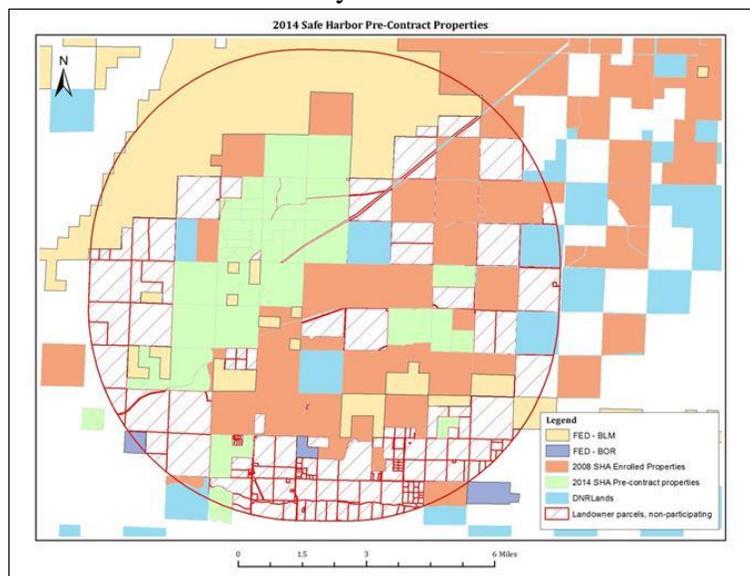
Private Lands/Access

Safe Harbor for Pygmy Rabbits: Biologist Comstock coordinated safe harbor permit application processing with Chris Warren of FWS. She also enrolled one last SHA participant for the Beezley Hills recovery area. To date, 64% of all land within the Beezley Hills recovery area is/will be covered by either a Safe Harbor Agreement or federal land management plan. 11,232 acres of private lands have been enrolled in Safe Harbor in 2014; permit applications and site plans will be finalized next month and permits will be issued in early 2015.

	Acres
2008 SHA enrollees	17,021.45
2014 SHA enrollees	11,232.27
Federal lands	15,663
Total	43,916.72

Acres of land covered by Safe Harbor or other land management plans in the Beezley Hills Recovery Area

Land owner status in Beezley Hills Recovery Area



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

Wildlife Management

Mule Deer: Biologist Gallie completed post-hunt ground-based surveys for mule deer in Douglas County (PMU23). Six standard routes are surveyed annually, each of them roughly 50-55 miles long within open landscape of fragmented green wheat/canola fields, shrub-steppe, and CRP. Routes are designed to collect trend data on buck escapement and fawn productivity in Douglas County. A total of 1,432 deer were observed this year, with a final buck ratio of 26 and a final fawn ratio of 59. The high numbers of bucks observed were heavily weighted towards yearling bucks (61%) following high fawn recruitment the previous year. Numbers of legal bucks (3pt. or better) were also higher than normal at 7 bucks/100 does (4-5 being the long term average). Fawn ratios are slightly lower than normal, which may be due to a dry summer and fall in the district this year.



Douglas County bucks observed during the rut – Photo by J Gallie



Sagebrush Bruin. Seeing a black bear in Douglas County is always a surprise, but seeing this one late in November was an even bigger one – Photo by J Gallie

Private Lands/Access

Access Maintenance: Access Manager Graves spent this week performing maintenance to public access sites. Graves concentrated on the more heavily used waterfowl sites. Graves also cut backing for signs and began organizing for a wood working station.

Rd. 3 Winchester Lake Access – Photo by Joe Graves



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

Wildlife Areas

Master's Student Thesis Defense: Manager Swedberg attended the thesis defense of Master's degree candidate Bethany Oliver whose thesis is a comprehensive analysis needed to develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. This is a part of an ongoing relationship with the Central Washington University Geography Department to provide opportunities for students to work on projects that have real world application on DFW lands while pursuing their degrees. Since 2003 the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area has hosted seven interns from CWU & UW, as well as two CWU grad students and two WSU grad students.

Okanogan County Snow: Snow arrived on the 21st and again the 25th and left accumulations ranging from three inches in the Bridgeport area to eight inches at the Indian Dan Canyon unit. Consequently, contending with the aftermath occupied much of our short week. Assistant Manager Noel Winegeart plowed the local parking areas and headquarters area. Noel also plowed the roads to deer feeding stations now located at the Indian Dan Canyon and Pateros units. Friday, Manager Dan Peterson and Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios took advantage of temperatures in the 50's to perform additional snow removal before the arrival that night of a cold front with single digit lows. Following the week's thaw/freeze cycle, four to five inches of extremely hard crusty snow remains across the Indian Dan Canyon unit.

Fidel and his Cat clearing the road – Photo by D. Peterson

Carlton Deer Feeder Placement: Maintenance Mechanic Ed Pierson assisted Private Lands Biologist Eric Braaten with placing deer feeders at the Indian Dan Canyon and Pateros units. Despite some challenges – trailers loaded with deer feeders traveling on snow covered roads tend to bog down the trucks hauling them – they set up six feeders at each unit.



Deer Feed: Wednesday a delivery of 40,000 pounds of deer feed arrived. All 20 pallets are now in our open bay storage site at Wells WLA.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart hiked portions of the Taneum Creek drainage with Yakama Nation Biologist Nicolai to discuss opportunities for further timber thinning and large wood placement floodplain restoration projects.

Tech Schnebly and Tech Hill looked for elk sign in Watt and Robinson Canyons. There was some sign of elk movement through the feed sites, but no elk were spotted. Staff checked the Taneum Creek elk fence crossing as well, which was still up and did not have any holes.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff spent the short week continuing to drill seed areas burned in the Cottonwood #2 fire. They have almost completed seeding of the previously restored fields, with just a few acres left in the south end of the 1998 seeding. In addition, we have ~80 acres near the Buffalo road still to be seeded, which would then complete our 330 acres of fire seeding planned for this year.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Winter Weather: Weather warmed up this past week with some heavy rains. Over the weekend cold weather returned and is expected to continue for most of the week. Later in the week warming temps and chances of rain are expected.

There are no elk on the feed sites and access to vegetation is good. Most elk appear to be in seasonally good condition.

Wildlife Management

Access Technician Kaelber assisted enforcement staff and state veterinarian Mansfield with the rescue and relocation of a cow moose that had been trapped in an irrigation canal (photo on right).

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart assisted Biologist Moore with the pre-Thanksgiving pheasant release.



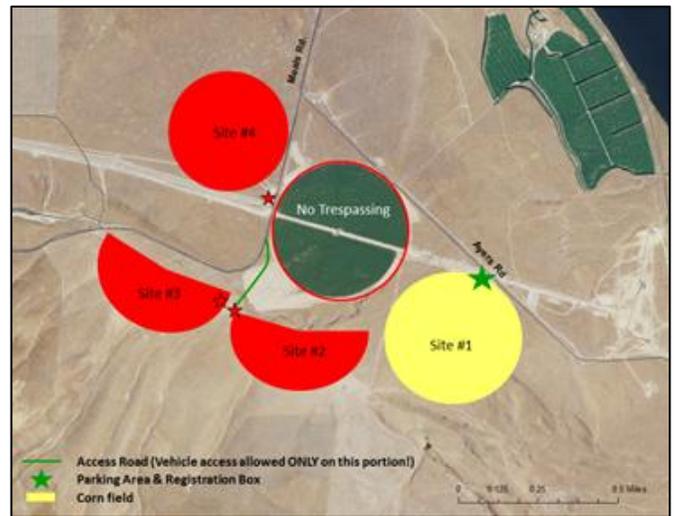
Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina released pheasants prior to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris participated on a conference call to discuss development of shooting range presentation for the Lands Division workshop. She will put together a short talk about the Wenas approach and next steps, including potential hurdles still to come.

Wildlife Management

Private Land Biologist Stutzman and Access Technician Kaelber worked quickly this week to get six new corn stubble access (CHAI) sites totaling 450 acres in place. After some vague conversations earlier in the year, Stutzman received confirmation from the landowner on Monday, and it was a scramble at that point to get the sites in place prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. The sites were entered into the Private Lands database with the appropriate Reservation dates, and fortunately much of the contract was already in place in Novatus, so Stutzman only had to finalize some details.

Access Technician Kaelber scouted out the properties and identified suitable parking areas that would meet the needs of the hunters and the landowner. Stutzman and Kaelber set up four of the six parking areas on Wednesday. A week's worth of freezing temps made the ground particularly hard for pounding or auguring in posts. Kaelber will finish the final two parking areas on Monday. The new corn stubble sites are in a prime location and should provide a high quality waterfowl hunting opportunity.



Hunting Seasons Recommendations: Biologist Bernatowicz re-updated the deer WAC's for the 2015 hunting seasons. There was a technical issue with the earlier version and all edits had to be re-made. A spread sheet of historic waterfowl counts for the Sec. 7 reserve was also created for the waterfowl section in Olympia and provided to the Waterfowl Specialist in Yakima. There was an odd increase in dabbler counts the last few flights. The surveyor was contacted to

confirm the counts. There has been a shift in dabblers from Snipes Reserve (~3 miles), Grandview sewage ponds (<1 mile), Sunnyside City ponds (~3 miles), and ponds where a private person feeds the ducks to the river in the Sec. 7 reserve. However, due to the availability of other refuge for waterfowl, the sec. 7 reserve probably has little biological justification.

Golden Eagles/Shooting Range: Biologist Bernatowicz developed a written response regarding the feasibility of a WDFW shooting range near the Bear Canyon golden eagle nests. Raptor Specialist Jim Watson had drafted an opinion earlier. Both Biologist Bernatowicz and Raptor Specialist Watson believed a shooting range at the proposed location would greatly increase the risk of a legal “Take” under federal law.

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

Ellensburg Area: Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked on fencing this week, including getting two gates welded by a volunteer and using a salvage gate from the Wenas WA to complete the Lang deer fencing cost share agreement.

Deer were hazed from an area in Thorp. Two adjacent landowners in Thorp met with Specialist Wetzel in the field to discuss deer issues.

A hay grower in Thorp signed a new DPCA for elk and deer damage. This completes the final part of the Thorp area for damage coverage; no areas in Thorp will function as elk shelter areas.

Master Hunter (MH) Coordination: Specialist Wetzel called a MH in Yakima to conduct hazing near Evans Orchards as well as patrol re-entry gates and fences. Some fence repairs have already been completed by this MH in that area.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt received word on Monday that, as of Sunday, the combination lock and pin were missing from the gate to the Manastash Cabin, as well as the combination lock on the cabin door. There was no sign that the locks had been cut, nothing stolen, no damage to anything, and no evidence as to who may have done this. Apparently someone has the old combination that should not, and is playing games. Officer Scherzinger offered to investigate the site and replace the locks, so Hunt scared up a new pin for the gate and two new combination padlocks. We’ll keep the new combination pretty much in house and see what happens.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom submitted all cultural resource review requirements regarding the Whitstran Access Site Relocation Project to Kat Kelly, including

Internal Cultural Review, Inadvertent Discovery Plan, and Consultation Letter documents. After all cultural resource requirements are met the on-ground work will be scheduled to begin.

Assistant Manager Buser spoke with South Columbia Basin Irrigation District regarding potential improvements to Windmill Lake, and received initial cost estimates from Ducks Unlimited engineers on the proposed improvements.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met up with enforcement and took them into the marijuana grow along Oak Creek that had been discovered by the WCC crew. The marijuana grow was actually larger than originally thought with a large irrigation system. Enforcement took pictures and pulled the unharvested plants. Later in the week the WCC crew pulled all the irrigation line and brought the pump and storage box back to Oak Creek.

Manager Huffman received application materials from HR for the Oak Creek Forester Position. Huffman reviewed the materials and set up interviews with the top five candidates.

Assistant Manager Berry repaired the doors on the hay barn with a little help from Manager Huffman. The doors had been knocked off the tracks when the haystack tipped over in the barn. One of the rollers was replaced and re-hung in the tracks. The doors were rolled back and the hay re-stacked. The doors were then closed and secured.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Lucky Acres Fencing finished the Mellotte elk fence rebuild section (priority 2) and moved equipment over to the priority 3 rebuild section (barrel gate in Kelley Hollow to west of the Kelley public gate). Casey Davidson, project manager for engineering, conducted a field review of the completed work with Assistant Manager Taylor.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Goodwill GreenCorp Urban Wildlife Management Class, 2014: Biologist Anderson provided WDFW's annual Urban Wildlife Management class to current participants in the Goodwill-Seattle Parks and Recreation GreenCorp work readiness program. Students are working in local parks, learning about ecology and ecosystem management, as well as working on their GED in order to move into the professional natural resource job arena, or continue on in similar studies. More can be found about this program here:

<http://www.seattlegoodwill.org/job-training-and-education/programs-and-classes/green-corps-program>

Wildlife Cameras – Citizen Science: Biologist Anderson worked with Citizen Science Coordinator Connally and Public Information Officer Luers to provide for information on last season's Bald Eagle camera. Anderson also provided assistance to the camera group with planning and landowner contact regarding District 12 cameras. <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/>

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson continued work and review for requests of assistance regarding species or habitat management consultation for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work; per local municipal code requirements to work with WDFW. Anderson also provided wildlife management recommendations to Habitat staff regarding beaver presence and conflict reduction techniques in regards to HPA review project needs. More on WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations and how WDFW provides assistance at the local and broader planning levels can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>



Swan Mortality and Morbidity Study: Biologists DeBruyn and Yarborough picked up sick and dead swans and organized volunteers from several NGO's to do likewise. A seasonal Science Tech will be starting on 1 December to deal with a rash of powerline strikes and sick swans. To date about 25 dead swans have been collected and several have been placed with rehabbers.

Skagit Valley Swan

Wildlife Areas

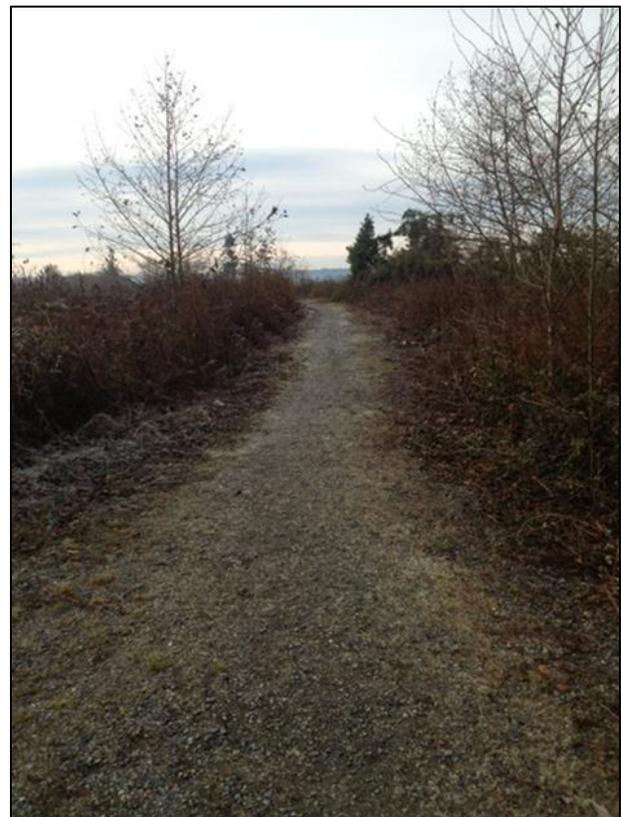
Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project Design Review and Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed 90% of the design plans for the project and provided comments. This week, the project Independent Technical Review (ITR) Team will provide additional comments and feedback on the technical aspects of the design. The ITR Team consists of consultants that are hired to provide a 3rd party review of documents associated with the project. Projects Coordinator Brokaw prepared and submitted an Information Sharing Plan to the NOAA Restoration Center. The Information Sharing Plan is required for WDFW to be able to use NOAA funds to monitor the project area.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and PSNERP Manager Theresa Mitchell sent notices to County Commissioners and other interested parties that the public comment period associated with National Environmental Policy Act requirements has been extended until January 8th, 2015. Brokaw and Mitchell also discussed needs for additional outreach to stakeholders during the extended comment period. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with the project Facilitator Hilary Wilkinson to begin planning the upcoming Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting and Public Open House. Both of these meetings will be in January. Stakeholder Advisory Committee members will be notified as soon as a date is set for the Committee meeting, and an announcement for the Open House will be sent to the Leque Island Interested Party email list. To subscribe to this list, please email Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Nooksack Delta Restoration and Flood Reduction Planning: Projects Coordinator Brokaw had a call with ESRP Manager Jay Krienitz to brief him on a meeting that was held the previous week, where Whatcom County officials and other interested locals discussed design concepts for restoring the floodplain and improving flooding in the lower Nooksack River. ESRP funds, which are issued by WDFW, are being used to fund a portion of this project.

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that new volunteers are continuing the trail clearing work at Spencer Island. A local Boy Scout troop cleared blackberry along the trail on Saturday. Two new Master Hunter volunteers have started efforts to improve other sections of the narrow blackberry-lined trail. Manager Boehm will continue to coordinate with WDFW Volunteer Coordinator to keep the trail clearing momentum going.



Before and after trailing maintenance on the Spencer Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the Cherry Valley Unit was partially flooded for the final weekend of the pheasant season.

Private Lands/Access Management

Law Enforcement Support:

Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Private Lands Management staff to assist Law Enforcement Officer Rosenberger on locating hunter information for a potential violation at a Waterfowl Quality Hunt site.



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

Wildlife Management

Pheasant Hunting Season: Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 420 pheasants throughout the week. Volunteers performed two big releases on the Lake Terrell, Intalco, and BP release sites before Thanksgiving. The last release of the season was done on Friday. Overall, the pheasant hunting season was very successful, with very few problems reported. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the pheasant release program at Ebey Island. The net pen remained secure and the volunteer team consistent. Manager Boehm reports that it was a good temporary fit for the Ebey Island pheasant program. Skagit staff Meis and Cosgrove assisted with pheasant deliveries and loaded 12 crates from the pens for the Whidbey Island release sites.

Wildlife Areas

ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management (ERWM) Strategy: Projects Coordinator Brokaw combined information provided by the WDFW team working on the ERWM document to make a complete draft. The draft outlines a strategy for WDFW to continue to provide waterfowl hunting opportunity and winter forage, while also supporting estuary restoration projects. This document has been circulated for review by the Team.

Skagit Wildlife Area Waterfowl Program: Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove monitored hunter and waterfowl use at the Samish Unit. Most of the barley has been fed on, though reports from hunters are that ducks continue to feed on the area at night. Recent rains have raised the water levels and provided good sheet water throughout the site. Cosgrove and NATURAL Resource Tech Meis walked out to the five acre barley plot at the Bayview North hunt blind. Barley has yet to be fed on. Meis purchased a Billy goat mower to be used for Debay's Slough Duck Pond Enhancement project with the Washington Waterfowl Association. Meis and Cosgrove

monitored water levels and duck use on the Island unit. Recent rains and high river levels are putting more water in the fields. Ducks have yet to begin feeding heavily at night. Meis repaired/replaced boards for a duck blind on the Samish unit. Meis checked the fields at the DeBay Slough hunt unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys & Management: Natural Resource Tech's Otto and Deyo, Biologist Caldwell, and volunteer staff conducted hunter success and use surveys on Waterfowl Quality Hunt Access sites across Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties. All private lands staff performed quality assurance checks for online hunt site information. Errors were found and forwarded on for repair. Flooding Issues: Otto and Deyo monitored flooded Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites (see below).



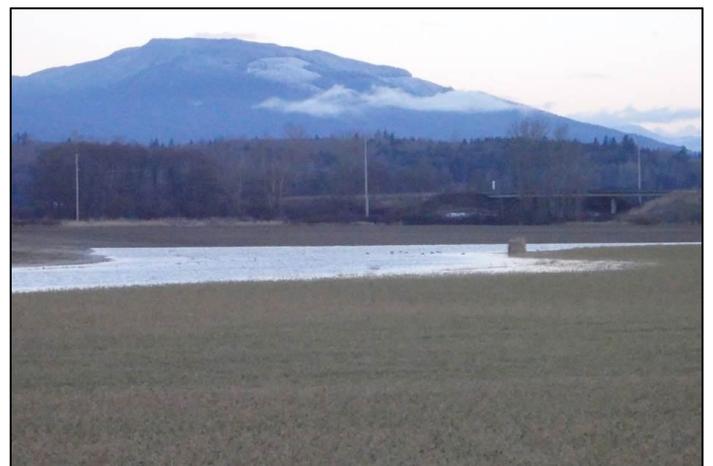
Francis Road flooding: Two Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites are currently under water at this location.



Lindgren flooding: One Waterfowl Quality Hunt site is currently under water at this location.



Miller East flooding: Despite the flooding, the increased water has amplified many hunting site conditions across the region.



Sam Bell South Flooding: Waterfowl use at one of our newly added Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Skagit County. Because of flooding, this site now exhibits excellent hunting 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

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith completed removal of a temporary electric elk exclusion fence in King County. The fence was successful in excluding elk from pumpkin and corn crops. Smith also consulted with landowners in King County regarding elk damage to agricultural lands and potential harvest options.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Headquarters: Interwest Construction prepared the site for the installation of the culvert thru the dike signage installed for first week of December, resulting in a partial close of the dike top trail for public access to the site. High tides and a high river have resulted in overtopping on the spur dike in several locations, specifically near the tide gate on Wiley Slough. Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove posted a sign to inform Wildlife Area users that the Headquarters dike-top trail will be closed next week for work on the new pump house being installed. Natural Resource Specialists Meis and Cosgrove loaded and delivered tractor tires to the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area and picked up the motor pool truck. Cosgrove checked the Milltown and Big Ditch access sites and picked up litter at both sites. Cosgrove improved the lines securing the barge at the Wildlife Area moorage facility on Freshwater Slough. An additional line was added in anticipation of high water this weekend. Cosgrove checked the site on Wednesday as water levels rose.

Skagit County Sheriff's Department also responded to a call for assistance from stranded waterfowl hunters on the Skagit Headquarters site. Hunters were stranded by rising water while trying to retrieve an injured bird.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm responded to a number of phone calls and email messages from local hunters. With the recent rainy and cold weather, more duck hunters are calling and also visiting the units for waterfowl hunting opportunities. Manager Boehm also coordinated the final pheasant hunting release of the season with his Duvall Team. While site conditions were challenging due to high water and muddy roads, the birds were released in time for the traditional Thanksgiving Weekend hunt.

Private Lands/Access Management

418 Special Permit Elk Hunt Management: Biologist Caldwell met with three hunters to retrieve access keys. All but one of these hunters successfully harvested an elk within GMU 418.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management: Conflict Specialist Witman met with District 14 hunt coordinators to discuss options for utilizing current master hunters for elk damage hunts.

Conflict Specialist Witman also met with several landowners in the Acme area of Whatcom County to discuss elk damage and upcoming options as elk winter in the lower valley. Conflict Specialist Witman responded to Lake Whatcom for a deer that had been shot in the neck and was in distress. Specialist Witman dispatched the deer and contacted Enforcement Officer Ludwig so he could collect the arrow.

Conflict Tech Cogdal monitored cameras, checking for elk damage/activity, and gathered Sierra keys from successful 418 bull hunters. He also aided 418 bull tag hunters in getting an elk on private lands in the valley. Separately, Conflict Technician Cogdal talked to Day Creek landowners reminding them about the upcoming meeting.

GOAL 4: SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with Steve Dazey to match up Master Hunter and citizen volunteers with projects and tasks that need to be completed. In the month of November, this included one Eagle Scout project at Spencer Island, one troop project, and four Master Hunters, all working to improve trail conditions at the Spencer Island unit.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Use/Success Data Entry: Biologist Caldwell entered and performed quality assurance measures on Waterfowl Quality Hunt use and success data.

Wildlife Conflict Materials and Areas: Biologist Caldwell coordinated field time with Conflict Specialist Witman and Biologist Yarborough to familiarize himself with conflict areas, landowners, and other details related to Wildlife Conflict in Region 4.

REGION 5

NO REPORT SUBMITTED THIS WEEK

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog Black River Watershed Landowner Outreach Workshop: Biologist Tirhi and staff worked with USFWS, NRCS, and Thurston County to formulate presentation materials for landowners within federally designated Oregon spotted frog critical habitat of the Black River Watershed. Over 300 households were sent invitations to the workshop at which WDFW, USFWS, NRCS, Thurston County Conservation District, and Thurston County will present an overview of spotted frogs, state (endangered) and federal (threatened) listing, and what this means to the landowner. Tirhi and staff designed this meeting in particular to begin

working with those landowners on whose lands spotted frogs oviposition (lay eggs) in order to improve conditions for the landowner, but also for the frogs. One of those needs is invasive reed canary grass control.



Male and female Oregon spotted frog near newly laid egg mass – Photo by K. McAllister

Willapa Bay Waterfowl Flights: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom conducted two flights in Willapa Bay during November. Flights are being conducted to document locations and record species composition on large rafts of dabbling ducks. This partly is in response to an issue raised by the potential spraying of an invasive eel

grass (*Zostera japonica*) and to continue to survey five traditional cells historically flown by the USFWS. Surveys are also being conducted to document a long-term index of waterfowl populations using Willapa Bay. Willapa Bay is the second largest Bay on the west coast within the lower 48 states. One remaining flight will be conducted this January during the traditional mid-winter survey period. The survey results from flight # 2 and #3 are attached.

Flight # 2 November 7th, 2014

Cell	Mallards	American Wigeon	Teal	Northern Pintail	Gadwall	Unknown Dabbling	Totals
1	962	1132	372	1028	0	2308	5802
2	73	32	0	0	0	107	212
3	617	3926	755	1320	4	1162	7784
4	294	2270	386	1380	1	160	4491
PL	483	935	55	1500	0	55	3028
Total	2429	8295	1568	5228	5	3792	21317

Flight # 3 November 20th, 2014

Cell	Mallards	American Wigeon	Teal	Northern Pintail	Gadwall	Unknown Dabbling	Totals
1	1117	94	35	100	0	970	2316
2	89	458	167	375	0	178	1267
3	1223	4721	522	4460	2	392	11320
4	458	3102	146	734	0	585	5025
PL	338	230	350	1700	0	40	2658
Totals	3225	8605	1220	7369	2	2165	22586