

Wildlife Program

Week of August 29 – September 4, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Field Tour: Supervisor McCanna was asked to plan and lead a field tour in the Profanity Peak wolf pack territory. McCanna led the tour, which featured commissioners, representatives, legislators, conservation group representatives, and headquarters personnel. The tour went well, with lots of good questions being asked.

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on multiple conference calls this week regarding current wolf activity in Profanity Peak.

Profanity Peak: Lethal removal activities continued throughout the week, including monitoring of the collared animals.

Depredation Investigation: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman responded to a call regarding a dead calf along Deadman Creek Road in Ferry County. Evidence observed at the scene confirmed it was a wolf kill. Weatherman contacted range riders in both Stevens and Ferry counties.

Huckleberry Area Trail Camera Check: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett checked a trail camera placed near livestock in the Huckleberry territory. Only photos of hunters, the landowner, deer, and moose were on the camera.

Canid Report in Spokane County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett received information that a Medical Lake area agency security guard reported seeing what was thought to be six to eight wolves chasing deer. After a long conversation with the reporting party, he was confident he had seen a group of coyotes. Information was provided about biology and safety in coyote country, as the reporting party is new to the area.

Herding Dog Missing: Biologist Earl spoke with a range rider who reported one of his herding dogs going missing. The dog that went missing near Mount Misery last week was located several days later in the area.

OR-38: Biologist Earl contacted Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA-L) cooperators to inform them of OR-38's movements through grazing areas this week. OR-38 traveled through the Peola and Alpowa Creek areas early this week before returning to U.S. Forest Service (USFS) property 20 miles southwest of Pomeroy. Natural Resource Technician Wade was also contacted by a livestock owner in the area who was inquiring about OR-38. Wade informed the livestock owner that OR-38 was no longer in the immediate area.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Wolf Management: Biologist checked a couple of cameras deployed in the Upper Methow Valley to document wolf activity. No wolves were detected on those cameras, but the unbaited multi-carnivore cameras continue to produce wolf photos.

Wolf in the Upper Methow Valley – Photo by WSU/WDFW remote camera



REGION 1

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

Forest Grouse Wing Barrels: Biologists Atamian and Lowe deployed forest grouse wing and tail collection barrels at Thompson Creek, Blanchard Hump, and Mica Peak in Spokane County. Lowe also set up a collection station outside the lab at the regional office. Forest grouse hunters are being asked to submit these samples to help us obtain species, age, sex, and other demographic data to help inform management.

Wing and tail barrel at Thompson Creek IEP entrance



Liberty Lake: Dziekan has been working with a potential Eagle Scout on a project at Liberty Lake. Ty, the scout, came up with the idea to replace old worn out rails and bumpers at the boat dock at Liberty Lake. Dziekan worked with Ty to come up with the required materials and plan of action. Ty gathered his troop and met Dziekan at the site on Monday. All of the rails were removed and replaced with new 4x4s, which were bolted to the deck. The bumpers were also replaced with new wood and rubber.

Starting to remove the old rails and bumpers



Ratcheting down the final few lag bolts to hold the rails in place

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



Lamont Producer Damage Plan Deer Hazing Operation:

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett began wrapping up a deer hazing operation near Lamont. More than 200 Master Hunter volunteer hours were put into this operation. The total number of deer counted at one time near the alfalfa fields was reduced from averages around 100-150 to around 50 deer this time of year.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Olympia Staff Tours: Olympia Lands Division staff members were here on Wednesday and Thursday to take a look at some potential grazing areas on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area and the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area, as well as planned timber management at Grouse Flats Wildlife Area. It was a busy couple of days, with much time spent in the pickups looking at the wildlife areas. Bob Dice and David Woodall led the tours.



Forester Sara Ashiglar describes planned timber management activities at Grouse Flats Wildlife Area



Clay Sprague visits with Dave Meisner at Grouse Flats Wildlife Area. Dave and Nick Steveson are rebuilding some to the boundary stock fence.

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

Meetings and Personnel: Biologist Baarstad attended the District 2 team meeting at the Spokane Regional office. Biologist Baarstad met with Technician Bendixen on August 31,

Bendixen's last day with WDFW, to review inventory and complete the exiting employee paperwork. Bendixen has been a tremendous asset to the private lands and wildlife conflict programs and will be missed by all. Special thanks to Biologists Prince and Dotts for providing the cake for a brief celebration.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Monarch Butterflies: Technician Quayle wrapped up milkweed and monarch survey efforts, bringing the total number of characterized milkweed sites to 317. Monarch searches were conducted at 116 of them.

Monarch larva found during surveys at the Royal Lakes – Photo by A. Potter



Pygmy Rabbit Monitoring and Survey

Development: Coordinator Gallie, Biologists Volsen and Gibbs, and Technician Shank met with Statistician Keren to develop a monitoring and survey plan that better meets our current needs in regards to Pygmy rabbit recovery goals. To date, we have followed a pattern of snow track surveys for active burrow systems that cover as much of the release area as we can, while also collecting pellet samples to provide a genetic identity of that individual (with University of Idaho partnership). However, this method is no longer meeting the basic needs of knowing how many rabbits are there and where they might be located. It is also failing to answer our primary question of whether or not we are establishing a wild population. By only focusing our efforts on the release area, we are missing what is now the evident pattern of our wild-born rabbits not residing in the release area, and covering a much wider distribution than is possible to survey. To address these issues, we asked Statistician Keren to solve our problems. Given his blank stare back at us, we decided to flesh out some more details. To better determine our distribution of pygmy rabbits, we will follow up with aerial surveys to locate their tracks in the snow, covering habitat outside the release area, connectivity habitat, and larger fragmented patches of habitat within dispersal distance (now x 5 generations). All detections will be confirmed by a ground effort. Additionally, if we get a positive hit, we will then survey for additional active burrows within 150 meters. Thanks to some on-demand GIS spatial analysis from Paul Whalen, we examined the last couple years' worth of active burrow data and found them not randomly distributed, but showing statistically significant clustering. Nearest neighbor analysis showed distinct patterns that if an active burrow

has a neighbor, it will be within 50 meters. Analyses also showed that by extending the radius to 150, we were most likely to detect second and third neighboring burrows as well. If no burrows were within 150 meters, one would have to go out an average of 1100 meters to find one. These additional surveys will help determine if detections off the release area are single animals or clusters of animals. It will also focus our survey effort where we actually have rabbits, and by collecting DNA sample, we will likely document additional wild born rabbits that have been outside our traditional effort, thereby better documenting the establishment of a wild population.

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock continued to work on her conservation plan for certification. At this point, the process has become tedious and frustrating. Biologist Comstock completed her conservation plan for the conservation planner certification course. She met with her mentor and the operator one final time to review the plan, make minor revisions, and get signatures. She was incredibly happy to put it in the mail. Biologist Comstock started off the week by contacting Grant County Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to remind them she was still awaiting review of 12 SAFE plans, which had been submitted on July 15. By Thursday she was informed by FSA that all plans needed to be signed and submitted by September 9 (previous deadline was September 30). She immediately contacted NRCS and expressed the new urgency and the plans were reviewed and turned in to WDFW on Friday. Biologist Comstock contacted all the operators advising them of the new deadline and made appointments with most of them to get signatures next week. Biologist Comstock coordinated with Biologist Dougherty on updating and managing the SAFE geodatabase. The next step is to import all Douglas and Grant county contracts into the database. Biologist Dougherty spent time working through the SAFE ArcGIS geodatabase with Biologist Comstock. The database has been up and running for a number of months, but other priorities have precluded the full implementation. As the private lands staff gears up for SAFE season, the database has begun to surface once again as a need. Biologist Comstock continued work on the SAFE geodatabase for Region 2, importing features from sage grouse SAFE sign ups.

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

Wildlife Areas

ADA Road Access Hunting Program: The Methow Wildlife Area experienced a few road blocks in regards to the ADA road access program. The area on Bear Mountain that bow hunters were drawn for is not an area that Methow Wildlife Area personnel were allowed to lock gates. This area is owned by USFS, and they simply, for legitimate reasons, could not allow the gate to be locked until October 1. The wildlife area was then told that all hunters, except for maybe one, have been relocated. Well, that one hunter showed up on Thursday night ready to hunt. The Wildlife Area decided to place the hunter in the Riser Lake area for two days until they could arrange a better hunting spot. Wottlin and Troyer both scrambled to find an alternative location for the bow hunter and eventually they were successful. After coordinating with the USFS, the bow hunter was moved to an area of Forest Service land located near the Beaver Creek drainage.

The disabled hunter was very pleased with this location and he seemed excited about the new hunting prospect. It was a scramble, but in the end, it worked out.

Master Hunter Volunteer Project – Fence Walkovers: Manager Haug met with Master Hunter Greg Roberts to construct walkovers across pasture fences as part of his required hours needed to maintain his certification. Roberts built four walkovers within popular hunting routes north of the Sinlahekin Headquarters. While building one of the structures, a hunting couple stopped by to say hello and communicate how much they appreciate the department providing these structures to assist crossing these fence lines.



One of four walkover structures along pasture fences built by master hunter

Private Lands/Access

Hunter Access: Biologist Dougherty worked with Biologists Braaten and Comstock on a hunter access geodatabase. This database will allow private lands staff members to track all hunter access information and also ensure nothing becomes lost as staff members transition into new positions or retirement. Additionally, all information being held in a single location will ensure that all records are kept up to date and will allow better annual tracking of the total acreage enrolled in hunter access within the region. In preparation for hunting season, Biologist Comstock finalized the hunter access geodatabase for Region 2. We now, perhaps for the first time ever, have an accurate accounting of all active hunter access properties in the region.

County	Contract Type	Total Acres
Adams	Feel Free to Hunt	6894.24
	Hunt By Written Permission	128433.46
Douglas	Feel Free to Hunt	9442.82
	Hunt By Written Permission	67432.11
Grant	Feel Free to Hunt	15046.01
	Hunt By Written Permission	57219.73
	Register to Hunt	565.39
	Hunt by Reservation	18458.54
	Subtotal	303492.30

Hunter Access Maintenance: Biologist Comstock made maps of access properties that need updated signs. Private Lands Biologist Braaten signed up an additional 10,600 acres in Grant County. Braaten was busy making landowners new maps and posting property. Braaten also spent time replacing faded hunter access signs in Douglas County.

Hunter access maintenance, Grant County – Photo by Eric Braaten

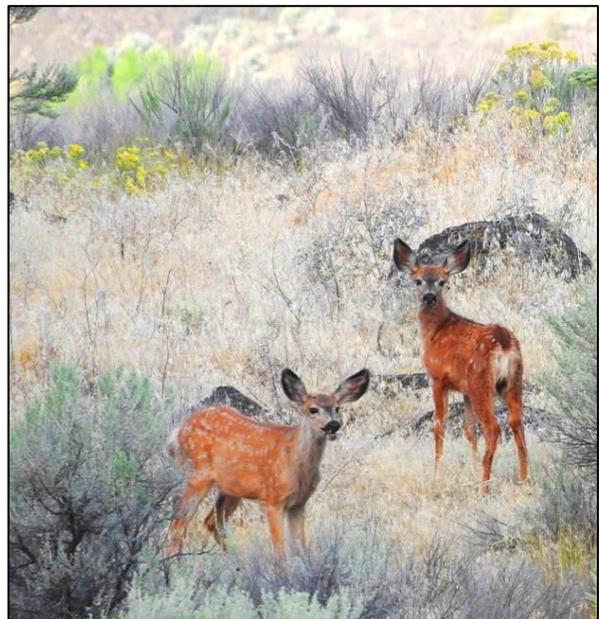
GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fences: The majority of crews working on Carlton Complex fences seem to have kicked things into high gear as fall is quickly approaching. Methow Wildlife Area personnel, especially Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin, have also felt the push for the finish line and our involvement remains fairly constant. This week, Wottlin and Assistant Manager Troyer were called into action to drop a fair number of trees impacted by the Carlton Complex Fire. The trees posed an immediate threat to the fencing project and were top candidates to fall directly on the newly constructed fence within a few short years. Quite a few of the trees were located in direct line of the fence, and in the past the fence had been attached to the trees. Methow Wildlife Area personnel are obviously trying to eliminate this practice with the construction of new fences around the wildlife area. The trees in question were located in the Frazer Creek drainage and were inconveniently located in steep terrain. Wottlin and Troyer were forced to load up and pack all necessary tools, including chainsaws, fuel, oil, and ppe to the top of the ridge. Due to an IFPL Level II restriction, Methow Wildlife Area staff members were forced to shut saws off by 1:00 p.m. The “partial hootowl” restriction meant staff members would have to make the hike several times to get the job done. Wottlin and Troyer worked hard to complete the project on Wednesday and Thursday, but Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin still had a handful of trees to mitigate on Friday. For safety reasons, Wottlin worked a safe distance from the fencing crew who had just made it to that stretch of fence, and he successfully completed the project. Work remains steady and constant in the Frazer Creek area. To round out the week, Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin accompanied CAMP’s Joel Molander on a fence inspection on one of the Methow northeast fences. Wildlife area staff members also dedicated time to updating FEMA logs and coding their work.

Mule deer fawns – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

Multi-carnivore Surveys: Biologist Heinlen and Science Technician Erlenbach finished up midseason checks on cameras deployed for the



Washington State University lynx occupancy model research project. In addition to lynx detections, the cameras continue to yield amazing photos of a wide variety of critters. This week we highlight cats.



Canada lynx, pride of cougars, and a curious kitty – Photos by WSU/WDFW remote cameras



Moose – Photo by WSU/WDFW remote camera



Pacific chorus frog literally biting off more than it could chew – Photo by Scott Fitkin

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff members Lopushinsky and Hagan met with Region 2 Biologists Volsen, Barg, and Pentico, as well as Forester Pfeifle, at Mission Ski Area to discuss possible forest treatments there.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik and Biologist Downes inspected an area of green dot road reportedly washed out and inspected by Natural Resource Technician Hill the week

prior. To their surprise, it had been repaired and no concerns remained. Note: this was a non-fish bearing stream.



North Riggs Canyon washout now repaired

Maintenance: Natural Resource Technician Hill dismantled and removed two wooden toilets in Section 13 of the Gnat Flats area. These were well concealed in a heavy use camping area with brown and green tarp. They were also only 10 feet from North Fork Manastash.



Concealed wooden toilet



Another wooden toilet



A dismantled wooden toilet

Trespassing Cows: Manager Huffman tracked down the owner of three pairs of trespass cows discovered along the Tieton River by Assistant Manager Berry. The cows came off of private land and a DNR lease in the North Fork Cowiche Area. The owner of the cows had been out of town and was having trouble with the neighboring rancher opening gates and shutting off water in the area. The cows got out of their pasture and down the breaks of the Tieton River onto the wildlife area. The rancher searched for a way to push the cows back up the hill, but decided the best way was to haul them out of the area. Huffman moved a rock at the Tieton River Bridge so a stock trailer could be backed up to the bridge. The rancher then pushed the cows across the bridge.



Three pairs of cows trespassing onto the Oak Creek Wildlife Area along the Tieton River



Rancher pushing cows across the Tieton River bridge into a stock trailer

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser received a call about a road killed badger just outside of town. Manager Buser located the carcass and collected a tissue sample to submit for the ongoing DNA study.

A road-kill badger reported on the Pasco-Kahlotus Highway. A tissue sample was collected for DNA testing.



Wildlife Management

Bat Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra completed the WDFW bat survey and picked up the last acoustic bat detectors at sites in District 4 and 5. Fidorra prepared data sheets and data cards and shipped data to Diversity staff members in Olympia for analysis. This concludes district efforts on the two year study.

Duck Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra set and baited duck traps and worked with Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Kaelber to band mallards on the Bailie and Mesa units of the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area two days this week. No birds were captured at Mesa. An explanation as to why the trap appeared tampered with last week and the sudden trap shyness of birds presented herself: an unattended young dog was located playing in the pond. Fidorra considered the dog for the District 4 Assistant Biologist position, but while she expressed great interest in duck trapping, she showed little enthusiasm for paperwork. Fidorra was able to contact the owner after calling the veterinary office on the dogs tag and she was eventually returned. The totals for new bands in District 4 are 366 mallards, 12 wood ducks, two pintail, and seven green-winged teal.



Friendly but troublesome dog on Mesa Unit that has been interfering with duck trapping

Monarch and Milkweed Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra compiled and submitted monarch and milkweed data from 2016 surveys in Franklin County. Two breeding sites were confirmed and much milkweed was mapped. Surveys will continue in 2017.

Grouse Wing Collection: Biologist Bernatowicz cut plastic drums and tried a few different designs for collecting grouse wings. One concern was keeping the paper bags dry. It rained periodically opening day and over the weekend, so we'll see how different designs worked.



One barrel design

Grouse Wing Collection: Biologist Moore created and placed five wing collection barrels throughout the district. Hopefully our grouse hunters and sampling effort will be successful this season.

Grouse wing collection station located in Coleman Canyon

Colockum Bull Elk Study: As the hunting season comes on, Biologist Moore has increased the frequency of his data checks to make sure all is going well. We currently have 13 functional GPS collars in the field, and the data generated from these collars indicate a definite change in movement patterns as these bulls transition from summer foraging to rutting activities.



A nice picture of one of our collared bulls taken by Colockum Manager Lopushinsky a few weeks ago

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



Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik and DNR Manager Smith met with Mr. and Mrs. Jantzer regarding a dispute of property boundaries in Taneum. Babik and Smith acknowledged the decades of stewardship this family has performed on public lands. The meeting concluded with everyone knowledgeable of boundary lines, required parking permits, and the required special use permits for this site. The landowner agreed to remove a Private Property sign on DNR land and work with WDFW for the proper parking and special use permits.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor met with the Yakima Construction Shop to field review the Mellotte Bridge and discuss work needed to keep crossing safe until funding for a new bridge is in place. A request is being submitted for the 2017-19 biennium.



Undermined abutment



Material deposition upstream of bridge



Aggradation upstream of bridge

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Lands Agent Hendrix met with a landowner in the Rimrock Retreat area who received a letter from Huffman about encroachment onto the wildlife area. The landowner is in the process of selling her property and was very cooperative in agreeing to remove all structures and repairing ground disturbance. The landowner would like to pursue a property line adjustment in one area. Later in the week Huffman received a

phone call from the landowner in the Lake Naches development who received a letter about encroachment onto the wildlife area. That landowner appreciated being given three months to comply and promised to get everything removed and cleaned up before snowfall.

ADA Access Road: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias spent two days brushing out the 511 ADA Hunter Access Road. This gated road doesn't get much use except for a few disabled hunts in the fall and a few closed road violations.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker serviced the registration boxes at the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit and Assistant Manager Kaelber serviced the registration boxes for Mesa Lake and Windmill Ranch. Kaelber also installed the registration boxes at the Bailie Youth Ranch, all prior to the dove season opener.

Wildlife Management

Register to Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman installed the four sign-in boxes at the Benton County Register to Hunt sites in time for dove and archery season.

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: Manager Confer Morris and Biologist Longoria met with WDNR, KRDC, and Kittitas County Public Works to talk about the planning grant for Manastash Ridge Trails and discuss any issues/concerns/necessary steps regarding the proposal.

Public Meeting: Biologist Longoria reserved the Hal Holmes Center for a September 29 public meeting to kick off the Manastash Ridge Trails planning process. He also worked with DNR Recreation Specialist Margheim on a flyer that will be posted at the trailhead kiosk to notify the public of the meeting.



Access: Campers began showing up at Vernita Bridge this week for fall fishing. Access Manager Garcia ordered portable toilets to be delivered this upcoming weekend.

Campers moving in at Vernita Bridge

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry worked with two Master Hunters to clean up shooting ranges on Cowiche Mill Road. These two Master Hunters put in a total of 13 hours cleaning

up three user created ranges. They filled up a 1-ton pickup with side boards twice. Everything from shell casings to car doors was removed, making the areas look like a golf course. Unfortunately, when checked on Tuesday morning after the holiday weekend, they were well on their way to looking like they did prior to their cleanup. None of the shooting areas are safely located or designed, and they create safety issues for staff members working in the area and the public who may recreate in the area.

Truck load of trash picked up by Master Hunter volunteers at the Cowiche Mill Road shooting areas





Before and after pictures of one of the three Cowiche Mill Road shooting areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Lands Agent Hendrix traveled to Olympia to attend the Lands Division's Lands Information System (LIS) testing exercise. The LIS is through Phase 1 and the group worked through the system to identify glitches, errors, and missing functions.

Wildlife Management

Guest Lecture: District Biologist Fidorra met with WSU Tri-cities professor Nelson on campus to go over classroom location and projector setup. Fidorra will be leading the conservation biologist class as a guest lecturer next week to discuss shrub-steppe conservation, tools and techniques of wildlife research, and work WDFW is involved in locally.

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted hazing patrols and monitored for damage issues with several landowners with irrigated crops near Rattlesnake Mountain. Active hazing, exclusionary fencing, pyrotechnics, LP gas cannons, and hunting with damage permits have successfully minimized damage.

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a deer damage complaint near the Benton/Klickitat County border along the Columbia River. The damage occurred at a large wine grape operation and included raking by buck deer and browsing on the grape plants and clusters of grapes. Multiple hazing techniques and strategies were discussed, including the use of general season archery hunters and master hunters with special hunting permits.

SAFE Site: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner to go over his SAFE plan before he purchases his seed and wraps up his preparation. Stutzman also visited the site to check the condition prior to seeding.

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel repaired elk fence at a location in the Taneum and herded elk from several areas nearby. Some elk continue to access the area through the creek and some elk moved south, likely to where they had originally come from after being displaced from the Weaver Road area.

Elk Hazing: One hay grower in the Cle Elum area and one in the Teanaway called Conflict Specialist Wetzel to report elk in hay. Hazing advice and some permits were issued to these landowners and they were reminded that an active Master Hunter damage season is underway in all the affected areas.

Turkey Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by a landowner in Liberty who has 60 turkeys mixing with his chickens. The turkeys are aggressive. They eat chicken food and scratch up a newly seeded oat field. The landowner requested that the turkeys be removed to another location. The landowner was advised that trapping efforts, if undertaken, would need to occur during winter when baiting and trapping is more effective.

Turkey Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed a turkey that was reported as a nuisance and safety concern near Chinook Pass. The turkey was quite habituated to humans, and it was approaching cars and people in a parking lot and in a picnic area, and chased people. It was hazed with rubber balls and rubber buckshot and herded back onto national forest land. It was reported again over the next several days and reported to the Yakima County Sheriff. Officer Myers and Conflict Specialist Wetzel again herded the turkey to National Forest land, where it was removed and salvaged at the Union Gospel Mission.

Single turkey in a parking lot

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



Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman completed an exit interview with Natural Resource Worker Farias, who finished up his employment at Oak Creek at the end of the month. Farias had been working since December and was a great asset to the wildlife area.

Wildlife Management

Interviews: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman participated in six interviews for the vacant Natural Resource Technician position in Region 6. Stutzman will hopefully be able to make a temporary appointment from the list of applicants to the vacant Natural Resource Technician position in Region 3.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Trapping/HPAI Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn continued waterfowl trapping in Whatcom and Skagit counties to test for the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. Cooler weather led to increased numbers of captures. About half the fall quota for sampling in the Puget Sound drainage has been met.

Immature female wood duck ready for banding and sampling



Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Permitting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited had a conference call to discuss permitting updates on the Leque Island Estuary Restoration project. The project team is preparing for permitting channel excavation work on the interior of the island, including initiating an archaeology review.

Spencer Island Estuary Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw set up a meeting for later in September with Region 4 WDFW cross-program staff members. The WDFW team will provide guidance on the project and will assist with developing and executing a stakeholder outreach plan.

Corson Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the fish passage project at the Corson Unit is completed. WDFW engineers installed the last two culverts and a pedestrian bridge this past week.

New bridge included in fish passage project at the Corson Unit



Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with the Drainage District 1 Commissioner on an invasive weed management project. Invasive knotweed was mechanically removed along the Ebey Slough dike in the unit. Manager Boehm will work with the WDFW noxious weed crew on an herbicide application later this season in an

effort to keep the knotweed from spreading into the interior of the unit. The district also repaired the service road leading to the dike and the east parking lot in advance of the busy hunting season.

Drainage district repairing the service road before hunting season opens

Reed Canary Grass Control: Manager Kessler finished the second cutting of reed canary grass on the Phase 2 area of the Port of Bellingham’s wetland enhancement project. This enhancement project is located in the southern end of the Tennant Lake Unit. He mowed approximately 11 acres of the grass in the 17-acre project site.



Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Trapping: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Deyo assisted District 14 wildlife program staff members with recent waterfowl trapping efforts in Whatcom and Skagit counties.

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

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Vicinity Recreation Features: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a pre-proposal form for developing a grant application to the Boating Facilities Program to design a motorized boat launch in the lower Stillaguamish River. If authorized to move forward, a full grant application is due in November.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to continue internal access road and trail improvements at this unit. Truckloads of wood chips are being donated and delivered by a local land clearing business. The chips will form a base on the roads to allow vehicle traffic during the fall and winter season.

Updating Reader Board Hunting Information: Manager Kessler continued updating the hunting season information and unit maps on the wildlife area reader boards. Current upland game bird, waterfowl, and non-toxic shot information are posted on all the unit reader boards. Kessler also coordinated with the Whatcom County Parks manager on when the boardwalk will be closed for the early goose, youth, and regular waterfowl hunting seasons.

Disabled Hunter Access: Manager Kessler put a combination lock on a Nooksack Unit gate for a disabled hunter to use for hunting access. Kessler worked with ADA Program Manager

Dolores Noyes on issuing the hunter his current special access permit to use an ATV for hunting access.

Island Unit: Cosgrove cleared brush from around the Lorenzen culvert and water control structure on the Island Unit. Cosgrove removed sticks and mud from the trash rack. Cosgrove and Meis constructed a new hunting blind on the south side of the Lorenzen field. Cosgrove constructed a platform to be used for a blind on the edge of a corn area in the Lorenzen field.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Land Access Program Coordination: Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked with two archery special permit holders to access private property in the Day Creek area of Skagit County, which has been experiencing elk-related damage to a corn crop. The hunters have had several close encounters, but no elk have been harvested. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call from a commercial producer who is experiencing elk-related damage to a corn crop in the Acme area of Whatcom County. The producer requested a hunter be assigned to the property. Two archery hunters were contacted to hunt the property and move elk out of the crops. Witman received a phone call from a youth hunter who was successful in the draw for Elk Area 4941. The hunter was inquiring about prospects on where to hunt and was arriving in Skagit County for the long weekend to do some scouting.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with partner landowners in the Western Washington Pheasant Release Program to sign this year's contracts. All partners expressed their enjoyment of the program and are looking forward to another successful year.

Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell headquarters. Kessler made sure all the waterers were working, and the feeders remained full. There were no mortalities.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo, along with Supervisory Biologist Caldwell, constructed a new permanent blind in Whatcom County.

New Waterfowl Quality Hunt program blind on a pond in Whatcom County



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

Wildlife Management

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a deer damage complaint near Bow in Skagit County. Witman toured the small five acre farm and spoke with the landowner, who has installed deer fencing on the majority of the crops being produced. The deer have recently become more persistent at getting access to the crops and are damaging the installed fence. The landowner has exhausted nonlethal measures and a damage permit was issued. Witman received a complaint from a landowner in the Concrete area of Skagit County who had an elk herd move through his property and break off a water hydrant. The broken hydrant was not discovered until the landowner woke up the next morning. The property has been experiencing ongoing elk-related damage and a fencing proposal will be submitted to the technical work group for fencing considerations. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell continued editing a new proposed elk damage strategy document for management consideration. These new strategies would supplement currently applied strategies and allow WDFW and tribal co-managers to accomplish herd plan objectives and goals over time, while also meeting the needs of those being negatively impacted by elk-related conflict.

Master Hunter Coordination: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a Master Hunter who is completing his volunteer service hours and toured some elk fencing projects in Skagit County that require routine maintenance.

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in Core Team conference calls to discuss and plan the next steps for the planning process. Manager Boehm also released an announcement to the Wildlife Area Advisory Committee outlining a recruitment process for additional WAAC membership.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Drainage District 7 representatives to begin repairs to the dike that breached last November, resulting in a 150-foot hole in the structure.

Damaged Infrastructure: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that entrance gates at the Cherry Valley and Crescent Lake units were damaged this past week. Gate poles and posts will likely need to be replaced.

Johnson\DeBay Slough: Cosgrove posted six safety zone signs and a “hunting seasons in progress” sign at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Hunt Unit parking area.

Skagit Access Sites: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resources Specialist Greg Meis assisted Access Area Manager Derek Hacker with removal of debris and a dumped

truck bed at the Spud House access on the lower Skagit River. Cosgrove filled potholes in the road at the Jensen Unit on Fir Island.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton coordinated with Dike District #22 on some drainage maintenance work that was needed on Wiley Slough. Manager Rotton is working with Habitat Biologist Jenna Friebel on the scope of work for the repair set back dike for the Wiley Slough Restoration project that overtopped during the March 10 storm of this year.

Lands Information System: Manager Rotton attended a test run of the Lands Information System being developed by our Lands Division with the assistance of the WDFW IT group. The system provides land-related data such as acquisition documents, deeds, easements, leases, and agreements.

Blinds: Meis met with Washington Waterfowl Association member Reb Broker for purchasing and building movable field blinds for some of the Skagit Wildlife Area units. These blinds will be built starting next week and will be built before the waterfowl season begins.

Samish Unit: Cosgrove posted informational sheets showing hunting hours and hunting seasons at the Samish Unit reader board.

Private Lands/Access Management

GMU 418 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologists Wingard spoke with several special permit elk hunters about the upcoming hunt and provided information about places to go and what can be expected. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo received reports of a large boulder blocking a road system. Otto and Deyo were able to locate and clear the road to grant access for the upcoming elk hunting season. Otto and Deyo identified multiple large elk scrapes on conifers and a scrape overlapping a bear peel.



Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo removed a large boulder blocking private land access along the 200 road system within GMU 418



Black bear peeling

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Contracts: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts for waterfowl quality hunt units in the region. Nearly all the contracts for the 2016 waterfowl season are complete.

Landowner Meeting: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell met with a new landowner in Whatcom County to complete contract signing for the 2016-2017 waterfowl season. Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with a landowner who is usually out of state and completed the contract signing. Many questions about the program were answered.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Lower Columbia River Shorebird Survey Planning: Biologist Stephens attended a meeting with USFWS and USFS Point Blue Conservation Science to discuss a planning strategy for surveying in the Lower Columbia River for shorebirds. For the past several years, this area has been surveyed from 14 survey points on the ground in Oregon and Washington and the islands have been surveyed using boats by WDFW and Julia Butler Hansen Refuge personnel. The survey is conducted in the winter and is coordinated by Point Blue Conservation Science. The survey area spans the Pacific coast of North and South America from Canada to Chile.

Black-tailed Deer Ecology Study: Biologist Stephens downloaded GPS and activity data from seven doe collars associated with the black-tailed deer ecology study in the Coweeman GMU. With the onset of cooler weather, deer were active throughout the day on the tree farm.

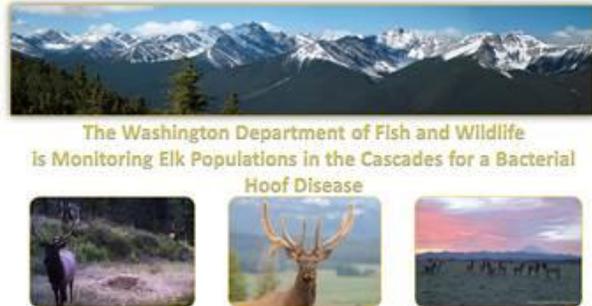
Western Gray Squirrel Survey: Technician Petrie and Biologist Bergh started the final checks of the western gray squirrel hair tube transects this week. The hair tubes were checked for squirrel hair and pulled from the field. This survey is part of a statewide effort to look at occupancy and abundance of western gray squirrels.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Anderson and Bergh met with a contractor who is mowing tall grass, Scot's broom, and blackberry to maintain and enhance nesting habitat for the western pond turtle in the Columbia River Gorge. This year's habitat work will be conducted on USFS land and an adjacent private parcel as part of our cooperative habitat management plan.

Western Pond Turtle Periodic Status Review: Biologist Holman provided input and edits to the periodic status review for the western pond turtle. Status reviews are conducted every five years for each of the species listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive in Washington State. Interested parties should look for the opportunity to review the document later this fall on the WDFW website.

Monitoring for Elk Hoof Disease in the Cascades: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is beginning a directed effort to monitor elk populations in the Cascades for Treponeme-associated hoof disease. This will only be possible with the assistance of those who may be recreating in the Cascades, whether it is fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, or backpacking. All elk observations are desired. Participation is voluntary, however greatly appreciated.

Information on how to participate, maps, and data forms will be available at selected USFS district ranger stations for the Snoqualmie-Mount Baker Complex, the Okanogan-Wenatchee Complex, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mount Rainier National Park, and the Mount St. Helens National Monument in the coming weeks. For more information, please contact the hoof disease coordinator at 360-906-6763.



REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Taylor's Checkerspot Seed Collection for Habitat Enhancement Projects: Biologist McMillan visited another Taylor's checkerspot habitat site this week to collect native seed for ongoing habitat enhancement projects. She packaged all of the collected seed from the same site and shipped it to Biologist Dave Hays. The seeds collected included:

- Small amounts of collinsia, plectritus, larkspur, and lomatium
- Larger amounts of castilleja, fescue, columbine, chocolate lilies, Oregon sunshine, sedum, clarkia, and camas

Bat Acoustic Recording Project: Biologist McMillan received the bat gear after Biologist Ament deployed and picked up two sampled cells (eighth and ninth in cell firing order, as after sampling five of the first seven, two cells dropped as unsuitable). Biologist Ament selected set up stations for a site on the Bogachiel River at Forks and another on the Lower Hoko River. Biologist McMillan managed the data SD cards, backed up the data and then mailed cards to Biologist Joe Buchanan. This is the end of sampling for this season. District 16 was able to get one sampling session completed at five sites, of which three were sampled twice during the season.

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

Wildlife Management

Pilot Grouse Study: Biologist Novack worked on incorporating the district into the pilot grouse study. One or two barrels will be placed in the field for hunters to submit wings. Novack visited one site to assess its suitability.

Access Areas

Bogachiel River/ Rearing Ponds: The access team, working with Bob Tiemeyer (Pacific Coast Salmon coalition) and personnel from the Sol Duc and Bogachiel hatcheries, held a one day work party to address repairs and improvements at this popular fishing site. Root systems over time have heaved the once level ADA fishing pier walkway. The decking was taken apart and beams were notched around roots, making the walkway level again.



Before



During



After

Flooding continues to undermine the original pier block footings of the ADA platform. The last two of the original footings were found to be dangling above ground, providing zero support. The two supports were cut off and holes were dug to accommodate 6-foot sonotubes for the new style footings.



Other work accomplished included brushing out both parking areas, mowing the road shoulders up to the north ponds, filling pot holes in parking areas, painting speed bumps, and sign replacement.