Wildlife Program

Week of September 5 – September 11, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

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

Producer Contacts: Supervisor McCanna met with four producers in the Profanity Peak wolf pack territory to discuss cattle movements, cattle behavior, and wolf locations.

Livestock Checklists: Supervisor McCanna met with six producers in northeast Washington and completed their livestock checklists for the month of August.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA_L): Supervisor McCanna met with a producer in the Profanity Peak wolf pack territory to explain how the DPCA_L contract works. The producer will sign a contract within the next week.

Payment Vouchers: Supervisor McCanna completed payment vouchers for livestock and range rider contracts.

Huckleberry Area Livestock Loss Claim Update: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett provided information to Olympia regarding an FSA claim for the confirmed wolf depredation of a heifer. Additional follow-up will be needed.

OR-38: Biologist Earl and Conflict Specialist Rasley each contacted DPCA-L cooperators to inform them of the movements through grazing areas this week. The wolf traveled all the way to Asotin County this week.

Livestock Harassment: Biologist Earl received a call about a black wolf chasing a cow calf on the breaks of the Grande Ronde River. The reporting party stated his neighbor (who actually witnessed it) called him and stated the mother cow was able to run the wolf out of the pasture. The reporting party gathered those cows and moved them to a different area.

DPCA-L: Biologist Earl talked to cooperators this week about invoicing for additional range riding in known wolf activity areas in Asotin and Garfield counties.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolf Reports: Our online reporting tool was checked for District 8, as well as other reporting forums, and no recent activity was found.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area Forest Thinning Units: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Forester Sara Ashiglar completed marking leave trees on the third and final unit of the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area forest improvement thinning project. Progress continues on thinning the 100-acre unit. Ashiglar and Palmer each visited the unit this week and they are very pleased with how it is turning out. The purpose of this thinning project is to reduce stand density, which will provide for improved forest health, improved wildlife habitat, and fire fuels reduction.

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

Summer Deer Surveys: District Biologist Annemarie Prince teamed with department staff members from other sections this week to continue summer deer counts on both traditional and standardized survey transects within District 1. As of this week's end, 17 of 20 survey routes to be covered this month have been surveyed. Both white-tailed and mule deer were observed, with classifications made for doe, fawn, and buck deer, including antler point category along with age class on bucks.

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

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area – Fair: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman, Natural Resource Worker White, and Ruth Dedloff (Lyons Ferry Hatchery) set up the booth for the Columbia County Fair. Dingman and Ruth worked the booth over the weekend.

The Columbia County Fair booth

REGION 2

No report submitted this week.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Assistant Manager Kaelber toured a private waterfowl hunting club in Benton County along the Yakima River. Many wetland management practices were observed, including comparisons of various herbicides and timing of application.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Leuck received and stored two loads of hay in the Watt barn. Ninety-six big bales of third cutting alfalfa were delivered. The hay looked good and dry, so it was stacked in the barn to keep it in the best shape possible.

Hay stacked in the Watt barn

First loads of hay delivered to the Watt barn

Wildlife Management

Duck Traps: District Biologist Fidorra set and baited duck traps. He worked with Private Lands Biologist Stutzman to band mallards on the Bailie and Mesa units of the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area over two days. Five dead mallards were found in the Mesa trap. They were likely harassed by predators or dogs at night and succumbed to hypothermia. Alternatives to the Mesa Pigeon Pond site will be located for next season. This completed the 2016 banding season and all trap materials were removed and stored for the offseason. A total of 415 new bands were placed

on mallards (second best year in District 4), 12 on wood ducks, five on pintail, and seven on green-winged teal this year.

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman with two male northern pintails trapped at the Bailie Unit

Biology Class Lecture: District Biologist Fidorra prepared and presented a 75-minute lecture to the WSU Tri-cities Conservation Biology class. Fidorra discussed shrub-steppe conservation, tools and techniques for studying wildlife populations, and projects WDFW is involved in locally. Only a handful of the 20 students were familiar with the term shrub-steppe despite the entire class being from Washington.

American White Pelicans: District Biologist Fidorra prepared historical colony data on American white pelicans for submittal to the Diversity WSDM database as a deliverable required by our State Wildlife Grant. Only two past entries in the database existed for the Badger Island and Crescent Island colonies – the only nesting colony in the state, active since 1994. Fidorra is working with Bird Research Northwest to fill in a few final blanks on past survey dates.

Duck Trap Materials: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and District Biologist Fidorra removed, disassembled, and stored the duck trap materials at the Windmill Ranch. Every effort was made to store the traps in an intuitive and efficient manner, but no doubt by next year the materials will once again be a gnarled mass of wire and zip ties.

SAFE Plans: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner to obtain signatures for his SAFE plans. After going over the plans, the landowner requested some small changes, which Stutzman made prior to getting them signed and turned over to the FSA.

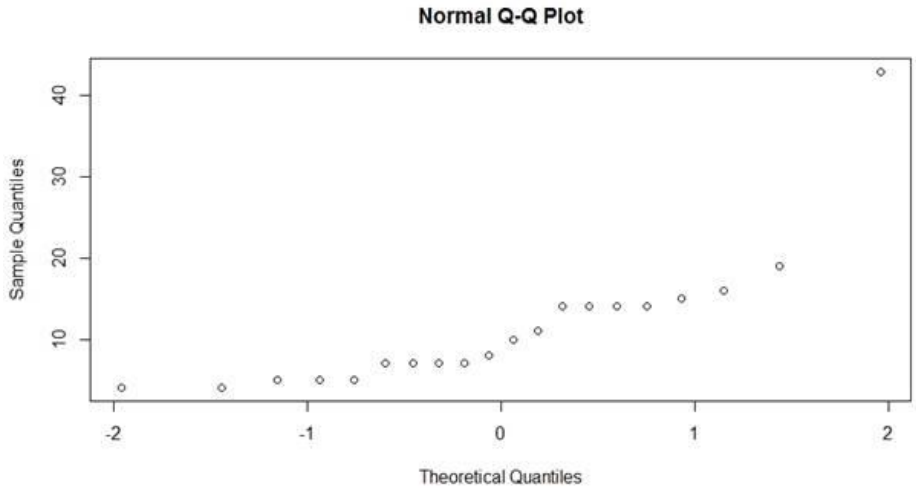
Habitat Planting: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman completed the application form for a Mule Deer Foundation grant to assist a Yakima County landowner with a habitat planting. Stutzman and Mule Deer Foundation personnel will visit the site this week.

Grouse Wing Collection: Biologist Bernatowicz collected wings and maintained the barrel with the help of wildlife area staff members. Thirty-two wings were collected in the southern portion of the district. Most hunters used the bags and filled out the needed information. Known grouse hunters were contacted before the season and asked to help out in the study. Some of the hunters still have wings at home.

Waterfowl Traps: Biologist Bernatowicz dismantled and stored the Sunnyside traps for the year. Over 500 birds were banded this year and recruitment looked good.

Milkweed/Monarch Butterflies: Biologist Bernatowicz completed reports and submitted data from 2016 surveys. Plenty of milkweed was found, but only one adult butterfly was seen.

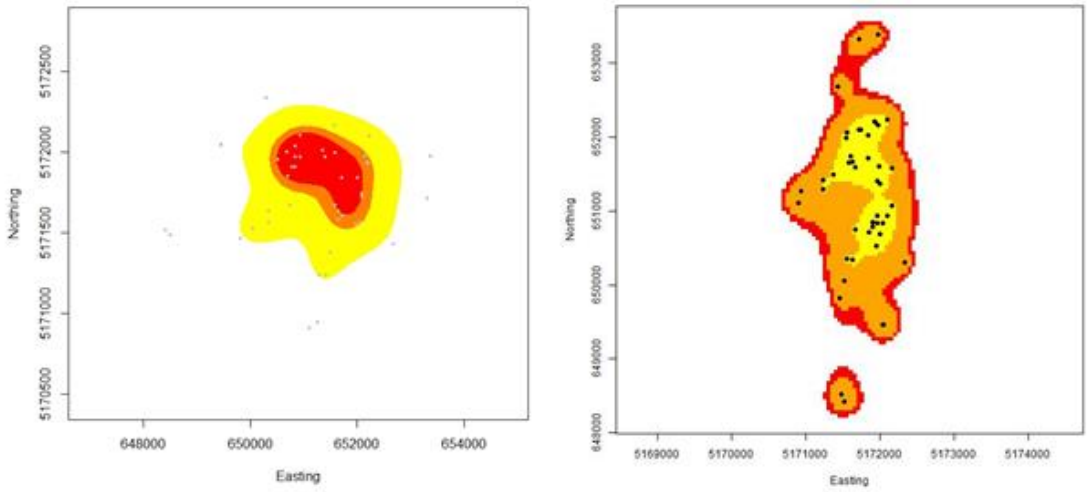
Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis: Biologist Moore and Statewide Range Ecologist Burnham field checked ecological site 301 GIS boundaries and a sample site that was producing extreme NDVI values within the Tieton herd's range. The outlier was identified while running a normal Q-Q plot on the NDVI data. We navigated to the sample site during the field check and found the GIS boundary off by at least 100 meters. This error included a portion of an Oak stand that included the sample site. Data produced from this site were censored from all tests checking for significant difference between the tieton and quilomene herds. Ultimately, the site will be relocated and the statistics will be done over. The rest of the GIS polygon boundary for this specific unit appeared to be correct. We also checked three other 301 polygons and the field and GIS boundaries matched.



A normal Q-Q plot illustrating the outlier NDVI data (upper right) at sample location #20 on the Tieton Range

Biologist Moore started exploring methods for doing a fine scale resource selection model using bighorn sheep GPS data and the NDVI scenes that have been collected. Potentially, the analysis will use GPS data produced during the same seasonal window as the Landsat 5 TM images. Moore looked at using +/- eight or 15 day windows. If eight or 15 day windows were used, we would have on average 55 or 108 GPS locations per collared animal respectively. When exploring literature, it appears this would be enough GPS data to accomplish the first analysis step of creating individual animal home range estimates. A prototype bighorn

sheep GPS dataset was formatted and analyzed in R for seasonal home range using minimum convex polygon (MCP), kernel density estimate (KDE), and the brownian bridge movement model (BBMM). After reviewing the products and some literature, it appears BBMM would be the most appropriate home range estimator for this effort. The benefit of BBMM is it will include all the GPS data points, allowing them to be used in further analysis, without creating under-smoothed polygons. KDE tends to over-smooth and exclude numerous GPS locations or, depending on bandwidth estimator selected, under-smooth and bring in large areas that may not be actual home range.



KDE BBMM

Tieton Bighorn Sheep GPS Collar Data Analyzed for Home Range Using KDE and BBMM

Grouse Wing Collection: The wing collection barrels were checked and 10 wing samples came in from the opening weekend.

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris attended the Kittitas Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance meeting to give them an update on the status of the Manastash Ridge Trails planning grant. Staff members finalized a flyer announcing the upcoming public meeting on the planning grant. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is going to post the flyers at the Manastash trailhead.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Responding to a concerned call from the public, Natural Resources Technician Hill pruned brush that was impeding travel through a section of the Whiskey Dick Creek Road. Brush had grown into the road and needed to be trimmed back.

Overgrown branches on Whiskey Dick Creek Road

Cleared section of Whiskey Dick Creek Road

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik and Forester Pfeifle toured one of our satellite parcels adjacent to Suncadia's ownership to assess impacts of their proposed shaded fuel break. Suncadia asked permission to do a 10-15 wide shaded fuel break on 200 feet of road through WDFW's ownership.

Overgrown branches closing in on access road to Suncadia's parcels

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser and Assistant Manager Kaelber met with Access Manager Garcia at the Whitstran Unit. A neighboring landowner had complained about anglers trespassing onto their private property. Locations for additional signs to delineate property lines were identified to help alleviate the issue.

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to conduct 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 met with a wheat producer with deer damage from the Kahlotus area to discuss their expired Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement. A new contract is currently being developed.

Finley Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand followed up on a deer damage complaint from the Finley area. Hunter pressure has aided in reducing deer damage in the area.

Damage Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored harvest on damage permits and recorded harvest in the damage permit issuance and harvest reporting database.

Elk Herding: Conflict Specialist Wetzel herded elk in the Manastash to Robinson area this week. Five elk were located, but they avoided the areas near the elk fence and instead chose to remain near irrigated croplands.

These deer were located along with some elk during a herding operation this week

Elk Conflict: Reports of elk in or near agriculture areas increased this week. Conflict Specialist Wetzel discussed elk issues with landowners from Cle Elum, west Ellensburg, and the Riverbottom Road areas.

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by two landowners in the Teanaway area about elk in hay. One landowner reported 60 elk in his field, and he was advised to employ master hunters. He also requested a damage permit. Another landowner reported a group of 17 bulls staying in his field, mostly at night. He agreed to allow a hunter who had drawn a branched antler permit for GMU 335 to access the area.

Night Elk Removals: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and USDA Biologist Jones conducted night elk removals from an alfalfa field in west Ellensburg. Four antlerless elk were removed and brought to the Union Gospel Mission. Only one bull elk could be located post-removal in the damage area. Removal efforts will be suspended at this time to evaluate effects and monitor results. Elk herding in the area will continue in an effort to displace the remaining elk.

Dead Marmot: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by a landowner who killed a marmot that looked like it had rabies. He was advised to check with the county health department about the possibility of testing the animal.

Injured Bald Eagle: Conflict Specialist Wetzel followed up on a report of an injured adult bald eagle recovered at Lake Cle Elum and brought to an apartment complex in Cle Elum. The eagle was recovered, brought to a veterinarian, and taken to a licensed rehabilitation facility.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill lightly mulched an area of exposed soil with weed free straw to prevent erosion with the onset of precipitation. The exposed soil was due to a culvert removal early last month. Hill will head back and finish the other side sometime next week. This site will be seeded later this fall.

Culvert removal before mulch was applied

Culvert removal site after mulching

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky met with CAMP Engineer Erin Muldoon and DNR staff members Marty Mauney and Tony Gilmer to look at RMAP work remaining on the Brewton and Cross-Over Roads.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Bats: Biologist Yarborough and biologists from the North Cascades National Park went to a property in Sedro-Woolley to conduct a bat exit survey. Using Anabat software, two species of bat were identified, little brown myotis and yuma myotis.

Wildlife Areas

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing continued at the Stillwater Unit. Fields, roads, and trails are being prepped for the coming pheasant and waterfowl seasons.

Leque Island Permitting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw read through an archaeology work plan drafted by a consultant for Leque Island and passed the information on to WDFW Archaeologist Katherine Kelly for review. Archaeological investigation is a required step in the permitting process through Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act.

Spencer Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw visited Spencer Island with Habitat Engineer Channing Syms and Habitat Biologist Lindsey Desmul. They walked the perimeter of the site and viewed the status of all of the existing dike breaches. They also located the area where a new dike breach and a pedestrian bridge are planned in the conceptual project design.

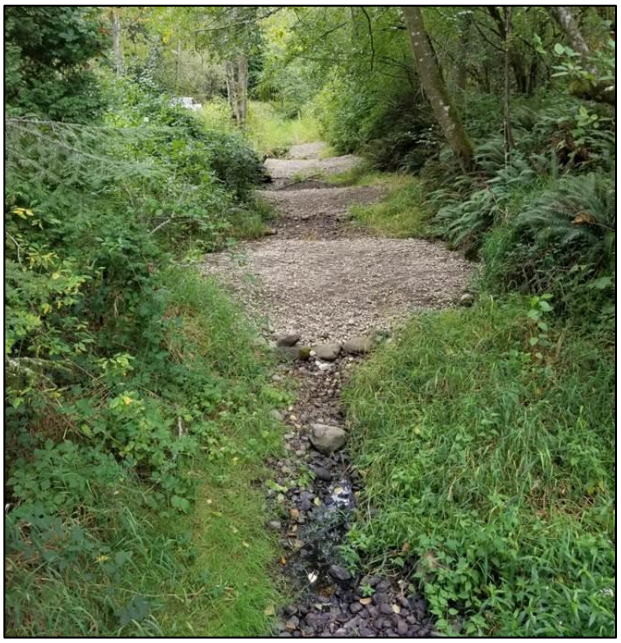
Top of the east dike on Spencer Island, looking west at a channel that has formed near an old dike breach

Looking south at the Snohomish County portion of Spencer Island, which has been connected to the tidally influenced Steamboat and Union Sloughs in the lower Snohomish River for almost 20 years

Snohomish Basin Technical Working Group: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a meeting with the Snohomish Basin Technical Working Group and gave a brief update on estuary restoration design work on Spencer Island, which is part of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP).

Terrell Creek Salmon Enhancement: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and Bellingham Technical College on improving Terrell Creek for

salmon. Using an excavator, additional spawning gravel was placed in the Terrell Creek channel above the Lake Terrell Dam. Additionally, the crew used the excavator to clear out a beaver dam built over the new dam V notch that makes Lake Terrell.



Terrell Creek Salmon Enhancement Gravel Project

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Trapping: Private Lands Biologist Wingard assisted District 14 Wildlife Program staff members with waterfowl trapping efforts in Skagit County.

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

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Banding/HPAI Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn wrapped up live bird sampling for High-Path Avian Influenza in the North Puget Sound Region. He is currently two samples short of his 60 bird target for the fall period. A case of HPAI has been detected in a mallard in Alaska, the first case in the Pacific Flyway since June of 2015.

Waterfowl Die Off: Biologist DeBruyn responded to a report of dead ducks being eaten by turkey vultures in a restoration area south of Marysville. A quick survey revealed ten dead mallards in an advanced state of decay. The information was forwarded to District 13.

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to complete internal access road and trail improvements at this unit. Fifty-four truckloads of wood chips, four days of dozer work, and an operator were donated 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.

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued recruiting volunteers for the pheasant team. Some volunteers have been busy with net pen maintenance in advance of pheasant arriving later this week.

Pheasant Monitoring: 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.

Wildlife Area staff members are gearing up for the early pheasant season opener next week

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm prepared the middle parking area for public use during the hunting season. The parking area is leased from a private party, and is a popular entrance to the east portion of the unit. Seasonal mowing was also conducted voluntarily by Sno-Valley Farms, who currently leases agricultural land on the unit. Seasonal signage was installed by Manager Boehm.

Leque Island Vicinity Recreation Features: Projects Coordinator Brokaw had calls with Statewide Lands Access Manager Shane Belson and local folks who navigate motorboats in the lower Stillaguamish River to develop a proposal for a motorized boat launch in the area.

Early Goose Hunting Season: Manager Kessler posted new signs at Lake Terrell informing the public that non-hunting recreational boating is prohibited during the early goose hunting season. He also closed and locked the Tennant Lake boardwalk gate and posted new signs to keep the non-hunting public from using the boardwalk during the early goose hunting season. Waterfowl hunting blinds on Tennant Lake are close to the boardwalk.

The early goose season is underway

Lake Terrell Parking Area Maintenance: Manager Kessler mowed parking areas at Lake Terrell in preparation for opening them up for the early goose and youth waterfowl seasons, and also the start of pheasant hunting season.

Trail Life USA Trail Building Work Party: Scouts from the local Trail Life USA troop worked at the Lake Terrell Unit building a new access trail from one parking area to another on the east side of the lake. There was a huge turnout for the project, and the scouts were able to complete the new trail, fix up the trail they built last year, and weed-whack the lake side trail.

They did an excellent job and we look forward to having them do additional public service projects next year.

Trail Life USA Trail Building Project Work Party at Lake Terrell

Samish Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove transported the John Deere 5300 and brush hog to the Johnson/DeBay's Slough and Samish units to mow grass field areas and seasonal ponds. Meis posted 20 safety zone signs at the Samish Unit before the early goose season opener.

Skagit Headquarters Unit: Meis assisted Washington Waterfowl Association member Reb Broker with the construction of a portable duck blind that will be used on some Skagit Wildlife Area units this fall.

Private Lands/Access Management

Early Goose Hunting Season: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo built and opened up waterfowl quality hunt units in Skagit County for the early goose season. Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell fielded several calls from hunters interested in hunting geese on Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites. Private Lands Access staff members took time to explain which sites would be open and why more sites are not open. Biologist Wingard also coordinated with Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton about public access for early season goose hunting opportunities.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo installed boundary signage on two Western Washington Pheasant Release Program sites on Whidbey Island.

Before condition of the boat ramp at the High Bridge water access site in Snohomish County

New ramp planks for the launch rebuild (work took place on September 8, 2016)

Derek Hacker assisting the Camp crew with ramp plank installation

Lowering planks into position

Adding gravel in between ramp planks

Finished ramp: Scope of work included removal of 10 broken and undermined launch planks that were replaced with new concrete planks and new ballast gravel at launch edge and in between the planks

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

Wildlife Management

Hunters: District biologists responded to numerous phone calls, emails, and office visits from hunters looking for information on access, populations, and more.

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 process. Manager Boehm also released an announcement to the Wildlife Area Advisory Council (WAAC) telling about 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’ hole in the structure. Manager Boehm reports the damaged entrance gate at the Cherry Valley Unit was repaired at no cost. The damaged gate at Crescent Lake will require a more extensive repair, but should be operable before the pheasant season opener.

Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton attended the Fir Island Farm construction meeting and pump station operation training. Final construction items are being completed and punch list items are being monitored for completion.

Johnson\DeBay Slough: Natural Resources Specialist Meis limbed up trees along newly planted grass edge, and removed fallen trees in pond area within the hunt side of Johnson/DeBay Slough Unit.

Skagit Headquarters: Meis and Manager Rotton continued to edit and redraft Skagit Wildlife Area maps for the upcoming fall hunting seasons. These maps will be posted on unit kiosks. Cosgrove checked game reserve signs around the Skagit Estuary Game Reserve on the south fork Skagit River. Manager Rotton attended the Dike District #22 meeting to provide the group with an update on the status of the Wiley Slough dike, pump station, and landowner agreement. Manager Rotton has been contacting pheasant release volunteers and getting them scheduled for the upcoming youth and senior hunts.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton met with a local contractor and Steve Liske from Ducks Unlimited to discuss the plan for the Samish Unit retrofits. Areas for berms were marked and the gate structure has been delivered. The date for installation has not been scheduled.

Private Lands/Access Management

GMU 418 Special Permit Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard fielded several calls from GMU 418 special elk permit holders. Biologist Wingard met with the Westside Auction elk tag holder to obtain a tooth sample from a recently harvested elk.

GMU 407 General Season Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with several landowners near Acme to discuss the Private Lands Access Program for big game on their properties. Two landowners signed up for the program. One site will be Hunt by Reservation and another will be Feel Free to Hunt. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo installed signage on the Hunt by Reservation site.

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

Landowner Meeting: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo met with a new landowner in Whatcom County to complete contract signing for the 2016-2017 waterfowl season. Private Lands Biologist Wingard also met with several landowners for contract completion.

Black-tailed Deer Auction Permit: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with the black-tailed deer auction permit holder about private land access and GMU hunting restrictions. Biologist Caldwell is set to meet with the permit holder in the coming weeks.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated three new hunter education classes in Region 4. Coordinator Dazey sent out two new applicant packets and one instructor application. Dazey assisted a chief instructor from Snohomish County

with setting up a 2017 hunter education schedule. The team plans to teach 11 classes in 2017, with each class having about 60 students.

Hunter Education Class on the Stilliguamish: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey evaluated and assisted a new instructor team at the Stilliguamish Natural Resources Building. The venue is ideal for hunter education classes and has a top notch field course. The Stilliguamish tribe is making the venue available for teams that need a venue to teach in the Arlington area. In addition, they have recently certified four instructors so they can offer classes themselves.

Master Hunter and Volunteer Outreach: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey attended the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council general meeting and gave a presentation. The INWWC has been very active in assisting the department, and Dazey and Region 3 Coordinator Aaron Garcia were reaching out to them to assist in several new endeavors. Dazey also reviewed the entries in the MHAG and WDFW bookmark contest. Several people from the Region 4 office were invited to help select the Region 4 picks, and after a consensus was reached the picks were sent to Olympia. The bookmark contest was designed to reach out to youth and help educate them on safety. It was also intended to be a public outreach effort. Bass Pro has donated three $100, three $50, and three $25 gift certificates as prizes for the three age groups. Many good bookmark designs were submitted, and the Region 4 judges found it very difficult to pick the top three in each age group.

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

Lake Terrell Headquarters Contaminant Sampling: A crew was at the Lake Terrell headquarters taking core samples around the barn and residence to measure the contaminants still present from decades old diesel fuel leaks. There were no obvious problems seen, and it will be a while before we hear what they find in the samples.

REGION 5

No report submitted this week.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom worked at Leadbetter, Midway, and Graveyard Spit this week. There are three remaining flightless broods: two at Leadbetter and one at Midway. All broods from Graveyard Spit have reached and exceeded fledging status and no further surveys are necessary. The final brood follow-up surveys for Leadbetter will be conducted by refuge

staff members while Sundstrom will follow up with the remaining one-chick brood at Midway Beach.

Fisher Camera Trapping Project: The District 16 Fisher Team (Biologist Ament, and tribal biologist's Cullinan and Godbolt) spent time last week conducting checks of stations with two assigned hexes. ONP needed cameras back for deployment in the park, so the team replaced most of the cameras previously installed at stations.

Hex 514: On September 7, the team conducted the second visit check of the three stations located within the hex. This hex had been monitored during the 2014 season by ONP and had no fisher detections. All cameras and other items were found to be secure at each station during the check. There were no detections of fishers at any of the stations. The bait was consumed by insects at Station 1 and Station 3. Unfortunately, the camera at Station 2 did not work properly during the two weeks. Some hairs (unknown species) were collected from gun brushes in the cubby. This camera was replaced.

Hex 515: The team also conducted the second check of all stations at Hex 515 on September 7. This hex was also monitored by an ONP crew during the 2014 season but had no fisher detections. There were no detections of fishers at any of the stations. However, the stations were investigated by various species. A skunk visited Station 1. A cougar and deer were photographed at Station 2. A bear spent some time at Station 3 and a UFO was captured in one photo at this station. The final check of the stations for Hexes 514 and 515 will be September 21 (unless Patti Happe from ONP directs the team to run Hex 514 for another two week period).

Spotted skunk and a UFO encountered at stations in Hex 514

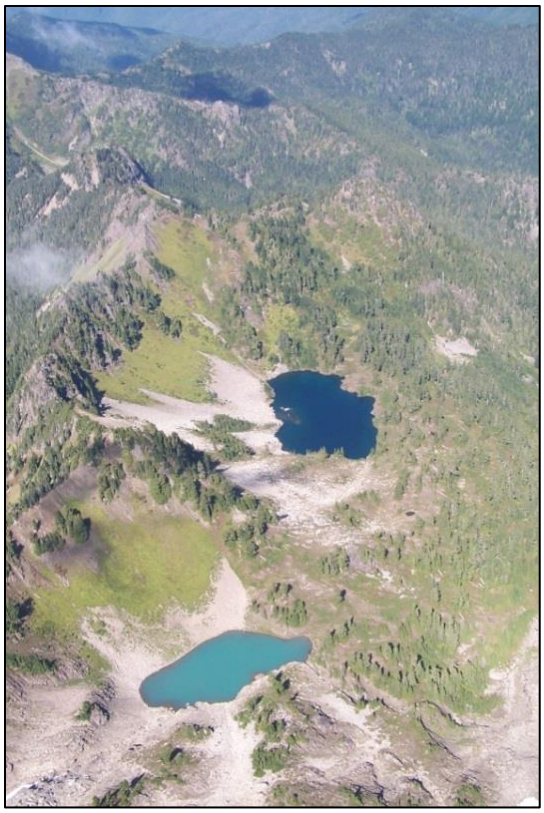
Cougar investigates the bait at Station 2

Black bear indulges in chicken drumsticks and then bites the cubby at Station 3

Elk Monitoring Flight: Biologist Ament conducted an aerial survey on September 8 to monitor collared cow elk in the Clearwater and Sol Duc GMUs. These elk were collared in March of 2011. A total of 22 elk in the Clearwater and eight elk in the Sol Duc were originally collared. The elk were previously monitored quarterly from the air, but the last flight conducted was on September 9, 2014. There were some previous mortalities documented for each group. District Biologist McMillan assisted with the flight by producing maps of the last documented locations for each elk. Two previous flight plans were cancelled due to unsuitable weather. Rite Bros Aviation provided the Cessna plane and experienced pilot Rick Mowbray. There were very good flight conditions for the survey. Biologist Ament heard signals for all the remaining 15 Clearwater elk and all six of the Sol Duc elk but one. There were only two new mortalities for Clearwater elk and two new mortalities for the Sol Duc elk. She pinpointed locations for all live and dead elk. One of the Sol Duc mortality signals was tracked to La Push. It was realized that this collar was likely retrieved from the field and is sitting in the Quillayute biologist office. There were no visuals of any of the collared elk during the survey. A few other elk groups were observed, including a herd observed at the Forks Airport during a stretch break. A summary report, flight notes, and GPS track of the flight will be provided for the survey. The flight time was exactly 4.5 hours. Efforts may be made later this fall to retrieve collars from the field. The collars from previous known mortalities were still in the locations found on earlier flights. However, one collar in the Sol Duc River was heard further down river from where it was located during the last flight.

Up close view of Mount Olympus

The Hoh River Valley



High elevation Olympic NP lakes

Elk bedded down at the Forks Airport

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

Wildlife Management

Nature Conservancy Preserve Management: Biologist Novack visited with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) at their 6,000 acre Ellsworth Preserve property in Pacific County. Novack was given a tour of the property and an overview of TNC's efforts to improve the forest habitat to benefit fish and wildlife. Further discussion focused on the potential inclusion of Ellsworth into the NOVA grant application.

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

Private Lands /Conflict

Access to FIA Lands: Biologist Novack made contact with American Forest Management and obtained an update on access restrictions to properties they manage for FIA. FIA recently purchased a large block from Rayonier. A map was acquired of the access management for this large block in Pacific County, which will continue to be managed under a fee-access system.