

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates: December 2-3, 2011, Commission Meeting

Agenda item: Enforcement Program Overview - Briefing

Staff Contact: Bruce Bjork, Chief/Assistant Director, and Garret Ward, Budget and Records Division Manager

Presenter(s): Bruce Bjork, Chief/Assistant Director

Background:

As a general authority law enforcement entity, the Enforcement Program provides protection for the state's fish and wildlife habitats and species, prevents and manages human/wildlife conflicts, provides public safety, and conducts outreach and education activities for both the citizens and resource users of Washington State. Commissioned Fish and Wildlife Police Officers stationed in six regions throughout the state work with a variety of state, local, and federal agencies to enforce all fish and wildlife laws, general criminal laws, and WDFW rules. Officers also increase public safety by responding to dangerous wildlife conflicts, enforcing public health shellfish restrictions set by the Department of Health (DOH), enforcing boater safety laws, and providing general policing services in remote locations.

Enforcement Program staff educate residents and visitors of the state through public contacts, Hunter Education, and the Master Hunter Permit Program. Officers also train volunteers, through the “Eyes in the Woods” Crime Observation Reporting Training (C.O.R.T.), on how to identify and report fish and wildlife crimes.

Officers hold commissions through memorandums of understanding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA-OLE), and therefore have jurisdiction over specific federal violations. The most important of these are violations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Lacey Act.

Officers work joint patrols and coordinate with these federal agencies as well as with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Forest Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Land Management, tribal police, and the Department of Homeland Security. They frequently participate in U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection smuggling interdiction patrols at ports of entry and on marine waters along the U.S. - Canada border.

Fish and Wildlife Police Officers hold local county commissions to enforce county ordinances as they relate to trespass, no shooting zones, boating safety, boating noise restrictions, and off-road vehicle restrictions.

With increasing threats of domestic terrorism, emergency preparedness is an increasingly important aspect of an Officer's job function. Officers work with local law enforcement agencies on a daily basis and in the event of a major state or national emergency. The Enforcement Program also has critical responsibilities as a part of the Washington Department of

Emergency Management's Operations Center (EOC).

This briefing is intended to provide the Commission with an overview of the Program's current structure, challenges, and proactive approach to protecting our natural resources and the public we serve.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

None

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

None

Action requested:

None

Draft motion language:

None

Justification for Commission action:

None

Communications Plan:

The Enforcement Program continues to develop new communication materials and strategies to educate and inform our stakeholders.