

## Managed livestock grazing can complement wildlife management

By Dr. Jeff Koenings, Ph.D.  
WDFW Director

Wildlife managers and ranchers often don't see eye-to-eye. But while we have disagreed about livestock grazing on some wildlife lands, we also share some common values. Most importantly, we share concerns about permanent conversion of land to development and recognition of the value of farm and ranch lands to fish and wildlife.

While poorly managed livestock grazing on the arid lands of the West has drawn criticism from conservationists and fish and wildlife biologists, we at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) believe that carefully managed grazing—in the right areas at the right time of year—can help achieve certain wildlife habitat objectives.

Although we have long allowed some livestock grazing on lands we manage, the opportunities have been limited. Now a new agreement between the department and the Washington Cattlemen's Association will provide a framework to examine whether those opportunities could be expanded through well-managed grazing that

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## Restoration underway on burned Wooten Wildlife Area

Re-vegetation, salvage logging and other restoration efforts are underway on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Wooten Wildlife Area in southeast Washington's Columbia County, where the largest wildfire in the lower 48 states burned last summer.

The School Fire, which started on Aug. 5 from a tree branch falling on a power line, burned a total of 51,924 acres of the Umatilla National Forest, the wildlife area and surrounding private lands before its containment on Aug. 19. Almost all of the Wooten's 11,778 acres were within the fire perimeter.

Almost half of the elk and bighorn sheep and nearly a third of the deer thought to occur in the Tucannon Game Management Unit (166) were lost to the fire.

The Tucannon unit usually winters 400 – 500 elk, about 500 deer, and 17 bighorn sheep. (The entire Blue Mountains area in Washington, including

a dozen game management units, supports over 10,000 deer, about 4,500 elk, and 250 bighorn sheep.)

Erosion of burned over slopes, sediment washing into fish-bearing waterways with fall rains, and weed infestations were WDFW managers' first concerns after the fire. Native vegetation re-seeding was conducted as soon as possible along creeks and intensely burned slopes, in cooperation with adjacent U.S. Forest Service land restoration.

The salvage logging underway will provide some of the funding needed for other restoration work on the wildlife area. Once the salvage harvest is completed, logged areas will be reforested with both conifer trees and wildlife forage shrubs.

Kinzua Resources of Eugene, Oregon was the successful bidder for the salvage operation. In addition to removing some trees killed or damaged in the wildfire

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# Stokes of Twisp named Wildlife Farmer of Year

Vic and Carrie Stokes of Twisp were named the 2005 Wildlife Farmer of the Year by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts, Washington State Conservation Commission, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The Stokes were nominated by the Okanogan Conservation District with assistance from the Methow Conservancy and the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The award is presented to a farmer with a land base greater than 50 acres who has implemented conservation practices and managed their resources to create additional habitat, or enhance and protect existing habitat, to encourage co-existence with wildlife.

"We selected the Stokes because they have devoted so much of their operation to improving, creating, and maintaining critical wildlife habitat for generations," said Ivan Oberg, Okanogan Conservation District Chair. "The family has been advocates of improving wildlife habitat on their ranch for more than 80 years. Today, the ranch is managed by the landowner and his wife who together are avid birders and wildlife connoisseurs."

The Stokes operation includes over 5,000 acres of private, private lease, and public permit lands that are a mix of range, pasture, alfalfa, and small grains.

Vic, with his father and brother, started a Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Plan in 1989 with the following objectives: develop management strategies to benefit specific wildlife



species such as migratory mule deer, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, and non-game species; document the positive influence that cattle ranching has on wildlife; demonstrate the benefits wildlife species receive from a ranching operation; develop a prescribed grazing plan over the entire operation including public and private lands; and set grazing rotation for two to three years in advance and update as needed.

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benefits wildlife, as well as livestock operators. The agreement also has drawn the interest of the Cattle Producers of Washington, and both organizations want to work with the department to investigate additional grazing opportunities on department lands.

The platform for the agreement was laid out three years ago when the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a new policy for domestic livestock grazing on WDFW lands. In the new policy the Commission affirmed that grazing on fish and wildlife lands "is a practice that can be used to manipulate vegetation for fish and wildlife, accomplish specific habitat objectives, or facilitate coordinated resource management."

About a year ago, the Cattlemen's Association raised the possibility of additional, selective opportunities for livestock grazing on department lands. The request was made with recognition that grazing must be carefully managed and evaluated. The association also offered to share some responsibility for monitoring and evaluation.

The result is a pilot program focused on four grazing sites where we believe some livestock use could benefit wildlife.

Grazing may make the vegetation on these sites more attractive and useful to elk and deer. Disturbance created by the grazing may increase the diversity of native forbs.

The sites are the Pintler Creek, Schlee Ranch, and Schumacher Grade areas of the Asotin Wildlife Area in Asotin County, and a part of the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area in Kittitas County. Livestock have been excluded from all of these areas for years and much of the vegetation—particularly the grass—is coarse and not particularly palatable to elk and deer. As elk and deer are attracted to the re-growth that follows livestock grazing, they will be less likely to look for alternative foraging areas on private lands, where they may cause damage.

The department and the Cattlemen's Association are identifying the type of monitoring and baseline inventories needed to accurately measure the effects of grazing. We are both concerned about noxious weeds, so that will surely be a factor that we will monitor carefully. We are also determining the number of acres and the number of cattle for each site, depending on timing, availability of water, and condition of fencing.

We expect the benefits of cattle grazing will be demonstrated in this pilot program, but if changes need to be made, operators will be expected to shift to contingency grazing plans.

Because of that uncertainty, we're not charging grazing permit fees for these pilot sites. If the effort proves to help wildlife—and proves economically viable—then we will look at the appropriateness of grazing fees.

The pilot grazing program may be up and running this year. The Cattlemen's Association will help recruit and screen applications to use these sites for grazing. The association is looking for operators who are known to be good land stewards and are experienced in range management.

I'm pleased about this opportunity to investigate the mutual benefits of livestock grazing and wildlife habitat management. Whatever the outcome of the project, I know that our many discussions with the Cattlemen's Association have already improved our working relationship.

We'll keep you posted via this newsletter about how the pilot effort is progressing.

# New private lands hunting access policy approved

With more than half of Washington's land base in private ownership, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recognizes the need to reach out to private landowners to maintain hunting opportunities.

A new, three-part strategy to encourage private landowners to open their lands to hunting was approved by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission last November.

"We recognize that landowners who allow hunting on their lands can incur significant costs for everything from security to litter control," said Commission Chairman Ron Ozment. "This new policy is designed to help them meet those costs and provide them with other incentives to open their gates to hunters."

The policy provides new incentives for private landowners to open their lands to hunters. It also creates tougher penalties for hunters who take game from private lands without permission.

Specifically, the new hunter-access policy:

1) Authorizes WDFW to pay landowners to open lands the department considers especially important to maintain hunting opportunities. Implementation of this provision is subject to legislative approval of a \$5 surcharge on hunting licenses, which would provide about \$1.2 million a year. Those dollars could be used in several ways:

a) Extend the "Partnerships for Pheasants" project in southeast Washington, that was started as a pilot a couple of years ago by a one-time legislative appropriation, in which several landowners within a pheasant "focus" area were paid by the acre to plant and maintain good pheasant habitat and allow public hunting access.

b) Increase habitat enhancement projects in key waterfowl wintering areas, including the Columbia Basin and the Skagit, Snohomish and Chehalis River valleys. One example is



the "Corn Stubble Retention program," originally funded by State Duck Stamp money, in which qualified landowners are paid to not graze harvested cornfields, not plow them until after hunting seasons are over, and allow hunter access.

c) Expand current access agreement programs — "Feel Free to Hunt," "Register to Hunt," and "Hunt By Written Permission" — all which provide participating landowners with signs, and some which provide parking areas, registration kiosks, and permission forms. These access agreements also can lead to increased presence of WDFW enforcement officers.

d) Provide a variety of incentives to private timberland owners, especially in southwestern and northeastern Washington, who are willing to allow hunter access. Incentives could include improved road management, increased security, help with trash cleanup, and various access control measures.

2) Allows landowners under contract with WDFW to sell a certain number of permits to hunters, provided they open their lands to other randomly-drawn licensed hunters. This new Landowner Hunting Permit program replaces the Private Lands Wildlife Management Area

(PLWMA) program, in response to recommendations from a stakeholder advisory committee.

In January the Commission approved the first implementation of this strategy with authorization of permits for a special hunt opportunity in Grant County. Under the adopted rule, landowner David Stevens of Wilson Creek will open his lands to permit hunters. A portion of those permits are reserved for hunters who will be drawn at random through the WDFW special application process or raffles, and who will hunt Stevens' property without access fees. Stevens can sell access to his property with the hunting permits he has been allotted by the Commission.

3) Subjects hunters who take game without permission from lands enrolled in a hunting access program where a permit is required to the same penalties imposed on those who take game out of season. For poaching big game species such as deer and elk, penalties will run as high as \$5,000 and a year in jail.

Any kind of access agreements made under the new policy will also help landowners gain crop loss payments or kill permits upon filing of wildlife damage claims.

State law (RCW 77.36.060) has long held that wildlife damage claims may be refused if the property is not open for public hunting. Because the term "public hunting" is not defined in the law, according to the Attorney General's office it defaults to the common definition of all licensed hunters.

Recognizing that there may be legitimate reasons to limit or manage access, the Commission adopted a rule that allows for damage claim consideration if land is either generally open to all licensed hunters or if the landowner is under agreement with WDFW for some kind of controlled access. However, if landowners charge the public for access, they waive rights to submit damage claims.

# Washington's Wildlife Areas: Whatcom

From a fragrance garden and viewing tower with a video monitor at its base for disabled visitor use, to traditional hunting and fishing opportunities, the Whatcom Wildlife Area complex has "a little bit of something for everyone," as manager Tom Reed says.

The Whatcom complex is over 5,000 total acres in five units in Whatcom County, north of Bellingham, most within a few miles of Puget Sound and about ten miles south of the Canadian border.

The Lake Terrell unit (1,500 acres) is 10 miles northwest of Bellingham and five miles west of Ferndale. It includes Lake Terrell, a 500-acre shallow lake with two peat bog marshes on the south and southwest sides.

The Tennant Lake unit (987 acres) is about two miles north of Bellingham and one mile south of Ferndale, mostly in the floodplain of the Nooksack River, which it borders for several miles. The unit includes two tributaries, Silver and Tennant creeks, Tennant Lake, a shallow 80-acre peat-bog lake, Claypit Pond, created prior to WDFW ownership from clay digging for brick and glass, and extensive wetlands.

The Lummi Island unit (700 acres) is seven miles southwest of Bellingham on the island's steep and rocky west side.

Two units are leased by WDFW for public hunting, fishing and other recreation. The British Petroleum (BP, formerly Arco) Oil Company unit (1,000 acres) is four miles north of the Lake Terrell headquarters. The Intalco Aluminum Corporation unit (1,000 acres) is a mile south of the headquarters.

Lying between the Fraser and Skagit rivers and the largest estuaries on Puget Sound/Georgia Basin, Whatcom Wildlife Area is within a major Pacific Flyway waterfowl wintering area. The Skagit estuary supports the highest numbers of wintering waterfowl in Puget Sound and the Fraser estuary is western Canada's most important waterfowl wintering area.

"As ducks, geese and shorebirds move between these two estuaries," Reed explained, "they use our Whatcom Wildlife Area."



Reed has managed the area since 1972, but WDFW ownership and management began in the 1940's. That's when four dairy farms around Lake Terrell were purchased to preserve migratory waterfowl resting and feeding habitat and to provide public recreation. With Puget Sound's continuous population growth and development, Lake Terrell became even more critical for wintering waterfowl.

Some of the land was farmed to produce winter food for waterfowl and upland game birds, continuing today on 55 acres. In 1988 wild rice was planted in the lakebed and continues to produce seed annually. Several artificial islands were constructed to attract nesting waterfowl and are used by Canada geese, and more than 125 nest boxes for wood ducks have been set up. Duck hunting blinds were constructed on some of the islands and the lakeshore has been developed with boat launches and other amenities.

In 1974 most of the Tennant Lake unit was acquired in a cooperative agreement with the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department. Each

agency purchased 360 acres with Washington's Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) funds and agreed to co-manage Tennant Lake and adjacent Hovander County Park for outdoor recreational opportunities and protection of critical wetlands for fish and wildlife.

The Tennant Lake unit, including about 250 acres that continue to be farmed to provide food for wildlife, was initially managed by WDFW mostly for waterfowl and deer hunting and fishing. Use by other recreationists grew after development of an interpretive center and trail, an elevated boardwalk through wetlands, a boat launch on the Nooksack River, an observation tower equipped with a video camera that provides views for disabled visitors on a monitor at its base, and a garden of fragrant plants with Braille identification signs for the blind.

In 1991 most of the Lummi Island unit was purchased to preserve a peregrine falcon nesting site and the unique habitat important to this rare species. In 1997, the final 112 acres were bought

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## Washington's Wildlife Areas: Whatcom *cont. from page 5*

with assistance from the Trust for Public Lands, the Whatcom County Land Trust and an unnamed donor. The steeply sloped property includes 1,665 foot tall Lummi Peak, the highest point on the island.

In 2001 another 250 acres of the Tennant Lake unit were acquired adjacent to the Nooksack River to protect critical salmonid and waterfowl habitat, and by 2003, 377.5 more acres in the Nooksack and Marietta segments were added.

The Intalco unit has been leased since 1970 for public access and now includes a two-mile-loop walk-through archery range and several water impoundments.

The BP lease began in 1990, including a 20-acre winter grain farming agreement that provides forage for waterfowl.

Originally, the Whatcom Wildlife Area was surrounded by agricultural cropland and dairy farms, but today it's mainly private residences on small acreages and undeveloped woodlots on the suburban fringe. The only adjacent public land is Hovander County Park in the Tennant Lake unit.

The nearby Nooksack River drainage is recognized as a "usual and accustomed" use area of the Lummi and Nooksack tribes, which retain an active interest in

the functional resources of the watershed. The Lummi Indian Nation is located on the lower reaches of the Nooksack River and is an active partner in Tennant Lake restoration activities.

Adjacent to the wildlife area are more than three miles of the Nooksack River, most of whose wetlands were diked and ditched by the beginning of the 20th century. Forestry practices also changed the hydrological regime of the drainage and Tennant Lake's 80-acre peat bog receives Nooksack floodwaters on a regular basis now.

Forested land comprises 25 percent of the wildlife area's total acreage. The non-forested land is mostly agricultural lands, most now planted annually with cereal grains to provide winter food for waterfowl and upland game birds and to bolster spring waterfowl production.

The wildlife area is at least 11 percent water, including its two large lakes, several smaller man-made impoundments and wetlands. The wetlands provide excellent wildlife habitat as they contain a variety of vegetation types, open water, and forest structure for breeding, cover, and forage.

"This wetland habitat was the primary reason for WDFW purchases," Reed said, "because it provides essential feeding and loafing grounds for migrating ducks, geese, swans and shorebirds, and hunting grounds for bald eagles, peregrine falcons and other birds of prey."

The area's riparian habitat is critical to healthy fish habitat. Riparian vegetation provides thermal cover, creates pools, and maintains stream bank stability. The riparian habitats are also highly productive for terrestrial wildlife species, with the vast majority dependent



Hunting dog training

on them for at least some part of their life cycle.

Fish species found in the wildlife area's waters include naturally occurring native rainbow trout, coastal cutthroat trout, threespine stickleback and largescale sucker. Various species of salmon, lamprey, sturgeon and minnows are found in the Nooksack River, although some not in historical numbers due to the loss of meandering channels and floodplain connectivity from diking, including threatened Chinook salmon and bull trout.

"We're currently working with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and our own watershed steward to establish a chum salmon run in Terrell Creek," Reed said. "We installed an egg box next to the lake dam structure and fry were released last March. We're experimenting with how much lake water we can release into the creek during the dry summer months without affecting our waterfowl management goals. Depending on what we learn, we might remodel the lake water control structure to include a fish ladder and allow continuous controlled water releases."

Warmwater fish species introduced to Lake Terrell for fishing recreation include largemouth bass, black crappie, yellow perch, pumpkinseed, brown bullhead



Viewing tower and fragrance garden

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## Washington's Wildlife Areas: Whatcom *cont. from page 5*

and channel catfish. Largemouth bass were first released in 1974, channel catfish in 1988. In the past five years, 500 channel catfish (averaging two pounds) have been released annually. WDFW has also released hatchery trout in Lake Terrell.

About 50 species of birds live on the wildlife area year-round. Another 45 species winter here, 40 species spend summers here, and 22 species migrate through. Waterfowl arrive in the highest numbers in winter—up to 25,000 dabbling ducks, 1,000 diving ducks, 750 geese and 500 swans.

Wintering birds include the bufflehead, ring-neck, greater and lesser scaup, pintail, mallard, gadwall, widgeon, greater Canada goose, and tundra and trumpeter swans. Snow geese, canvasbacks, grebes, loons and other migrants, including a moderate number of shorebirds, pass through every year.

The density of waterfowl and shorebirds attracts raptors such as bald eagles, peregrine falcons, osprey, marsh hawks, red-tailed hawks, rough-legged hawks, short-eared owls, barn owls and an occasional golden eagle, gyrfalcon, snowy owl and merlin.

Twelve of the area's bird species are state or federally listed, or are candidates for listing, for special protection due to population declines, from the threatened marbled murrelet to the western grebe.

Lake Terrell is one of only a handful of lakes in western Washington with confirmed nesting of the common loon, a state sensitive species. An adult common loon and young were sighted in 1980, but since then no young have been observed. Loons appear to use Lake Terrell more as a staging area, preferring lakes without the disturbance of many anglers for nesting.

The wildlife area supports about 45 species of mammals, including black-tailed deer, cougar, black bear, coyote, raccoon, red squirrel, flying squirrel, opossum, skunk, beaver, muskrat, river otter, weasels, mink, red fox, cottontail rabbit, mice, shrews and moles. Five species of reptiles and 12 species of amphibians are also likely here, including the garter snake, painted turtle, northwestern and brown salamanders, rough-skinned newt, pacific tree frog, and the state endangered western pond turtle and state candidate for listing, western toad.

The Whatcom Wildlife Area provides 280,000 visitor days of recreation each year, including hunting, fishing, birdwatching, hunting dog training, dog walking, boating, berry and mushroom picking, and archery range and Hovander Park use.

In addition to the big draw of waterfowl hunting on Lake Terrell, hunting for pen-raised and released pheasants on the British Petroleum and

Intalco Aluminum leased units is popular. Deer and rabbit hunting take place on the upland areas. Both lakes offer bass, channel catfish and cutthroat, and triploid rainbow trout fishing.

From the 1940's until the late '60's, hunting and fishing were the main or only recreation on the wildlife area. Since the 1970s, big game hunting has remained steady, pheasant, rabbit, and waterfowl hunting have increased due to additional acreage purchases and development, and "non-consumptive" uses like birdwatching and dog use have dramatically increased.

Today the non-fishing/hunting uses make up 73 percent of all visitor days. The Tennant Lake unit interpretive center, trails and other facilities were developed to accommodate and encourage that majority of users. Local school classes, involving about 6,000 students annually, schedule visits for wildlife educational programs, tours, and hands-on activities.

With this high level and diversity of visitors, much of Reed's task as manager focuses on the impacts of and potential conflicts between recreational users on the wildlife area.

Local dog walkers, for example, are one of the fastest growing groups of users, with increasing demand for "off leash" areas in highly urbanized northwestern Washington. Reed has several dog walkers on his 18-member Citizen Advisory Group who have helped develop leash regulations and dog restrictions during portions of the year to protect the wildlife for which the area was originally purchased.

Other regulations, some developed with citizen advisors and other local, state and federal agencies, restrict hunting, fishing, boating, and public access in general at various times and places to do the same, and to protect public safety.

"This wildlife area may be one of our best examples of the dichotomy of the department's twin mandates," Reed said. "We protect, preserve and perpetuate fish and wildlife, but we also maximize public recreational use of that same fish and wildlife."



Wetland restoration

## Restoration underway on burned Wooten Wildlife Area *cont. from page 1*



for safety and for sale, Kinzua is felling and leaving trees on burned-over slopes to reduce erosion.

Only helicopter logging is allowed to protect sensitive areas from truck traffic impacts. Only helicopter landing sites approved through review by the new Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (see story on page 8), including local tribes, are being used.

During the logging operation, most of the Wooten is closed to protect public safety. Most campgrounds in the Tucannon River valley floor are closed, although more of them will open as the operation moves along and out of the area. The Umatilla National Forest adjacent to the Wooten is not closed, so visitors can travel through the wildlife area and into the forest. Vehicle traffic on the river road, however, is delayed periodically for up to an hour at a time while helicopters are working in the area to move logs.

Fishing on the Tucannon impoundments that open March 1 is unaffected by the closures, but anglers should plan ahead for travel delays and reduced camping availability. Spring turkey and black bear hunting that

opens April 15 is also unaffected since the area closure is scheduled to lift by April 7.

Updated access information is posted regularly on the Wooten webpage of WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/r1woot.htm>), and on both the area headquarters phone message system (509-843-1530) and on-site kiosk.

Up to 14 miles of elk fence on the Wooten, which keeps elk on public lands and off private property where they cause damage, was also destroyed in the fire. Elk fence re-construction began last fall, but was shut down by weather and funding. WDFW is seeking the remaining necessary funds from the Legislature to complete the fence.

"Cooperation among agencies in the aftermath of the fire has been very beneficial," said WDFW area assistant manager Shana Winegeart.

She noted the Umatilla Tribe donated \$15,000 toward the purchase of plants, culled trees were collected from the Potlatch Corporation, the U.S. Forest Service donated weed-free straw for erosion control, the Natural Resource Conservation Service cooperated on the re-seeding effort, and a Rocky Mountain

Elk Foundation grant has been sought to control weeds and clean up campgrounds.

"We'll seek more grants in the future as fire rehabilitation needs become more clear," she said.

Winegeart also noted that local volunteers assisted in placement of straw bale erosion barriers last fall, and more restoration projects are lined up for this year.

"We need volunteers to help with tree plantings in March," she said, "and we'll start an 'adopt a campground' program this summer to rehabilitate camping areas."

Anyone interested in volunteering can call the Wooten Wildlife Area at 509-843-1530 for more information.



# New department protects Washington's archaeology, history

By Rob Whitlam, DAHP

The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) was created last year to protect historic and archaeological sites on both public and private land in Washington.

Led by Dr. Allyson Brooks, State Historic Preservation Officer, the new department is headquartered in Olympia and has a staff of 15 to help raise the profile and increase protection of Washington's heritage.

Key to the effort is DAHP's Geographical Information Systems (GIS) work, funded by grants to create a database layer of all archaeological sites, digital copies of the original site forms, and associated reports. Over 20,000 sites comprise the GIS layer, with historic sites and newly discovered archaeological sites added daily.

This GIS system is the critical tool used by staff to review proposed development projects ranging from federally licensed hydro projects to

timber sales on state land. Over 5,000 projects a year are expected to be reviewed.

"I am excited to lead the new department and spearhead our efforts to work collaboratively with other agencies in protecting Washington's past with these modern tools," said Dr. Brooks.

While DAHP is new, the focus of its mission spans over 11,000 years of what is now Washington state, including Native American use of the land and a diversity of resources available from below sea level to the alpine meadows of the Olympics and Cascades.

Besides documenting the human history of Washington, archaeological sites also contain a unique record of the biological history of the state. Faunal remains within archaeological sites, representing both existing and extinct species, provide scientific information on their range and distribution for thousands of years.

Every county and every environment has archaeological and historic sites, so every land managing agency is involved. The knowledge and ability to protect sites, however, can vary dramatically depending on agency access to GIS, trained staff, and understanding of the protection afforded to archaeological and historic sites.

DAHP is working with both the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the federal Section 106 review process on land development involving federal funds and permits.

DAHP will also be working with WDFW as the governor's executive order (05-05), signed last November, is implemented. The order directs state agencies to have all land projects reviewed by DAHP and includes cultural resource training for all agency employees managing capital construction projects.

For more information about DAHP, see [www.dahp.wa.gov](http://www.dahp.wa.gov).

## More access sites adopted

Several more WDFW water access sites have recently been "adopted" by groups who want to help maintain them under the "Adopt an Access" program.

### In the North Puget Sound region:

- Flowing Lake access site in Snohomish County adopted by the Snohomish Sportsman Association
- Lake Morton access site in King County adopted by the Covington Water District employees

### In the Olympic Peninsula/South Sound region:

- Hoquiam River access site in Thurston County adopted by Chehalis River Basin Land Trust
- Black River (Oakville) access site in Thurston County adopted by Chehalis River Basin Land Trust

### In the Southwest region:

- Woodland access site on the Columbia River in Clark County adopted by Woodland Lions Club
- Mineral Lake access site in Lewis County adopted by the Mineral Washington Neighborhood Association
- Beaver Creek access site in Wahkiakum County adopted by the Fire District Number Five Volunteer Fire Fighters.

In addition, the Snohomish Sportsman Association has committed to a one-time trail construction project at the Canyon Creek access site in Snohomish County.

Adopt an Access program coordinator Steve Sherlock reports that out of 508 sites across the state, a total of 18 now have group adoption agreements.

"Only 490 left to go," Sherlock said.

**Anyone interested in creating an Adopt an Access agreement with WDFW can contact Sherlock at 360-902-2375 or [sherlises@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:sherlises@dfw.wa.gov).**

## WDFW land use requires permit

Vehicle Use Permits are required for use of all posted WDFW properties. The permits generate funding for maintenance of WDFW lands and water access sites used by hunters, anglers, boaters, bird watchers and other recreationists.

One permit is issued once annually to each fishing or hunting license holder and is transferable between up to two vehicles. Additional permits may be purchased for \$5 each. If purchased separately, without a fishing or hunting license, the permit is \$10. Vehicle Use Permits must be clearly displayed and visible from outside the vehicle. They can be placed on the dash, hung from the rear view mirror, or placed on the front seat. The penalty for parking on WDFW lands without a permit is the standard \$66 parking infraction, but it is automatically reduced to \$30 if the vehicle owner shows proof of purchase of a permit within 15 days of the violation.

# Department of Agriculture praises WDFW weed control efforts



Phragmites

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) weed control efforts have drawn praise from those who know the battle best – the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

WDFW's Weed Coordinator Dave Heimer recently teamed up with WSDA's Spartina Control Coordinator Kyle Murphy to update the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission on statewide efforts to control Spartina and other weeds or invasive species.

Murphy told the Commission of the critical role that WDFW plays in the state's cooperative effort to control Spartina, an aggressive cordgrass invader of the Pacific Northwest's nearshore ecosystem that threatens salmonids and other species. With WDFW as a key part of a team of state and local agencies applying aggressive measures to stop the weed's spread, Murphy said Spartina could be eliminated from Washington tidelands.

WDFW has been involved with Spartina control for over ten years. Last year alone more than 1,190 acres of tidelands in the North Puget Sound, Willapa and Grays Harbor areas were either sprayed with herbicide or mechanically crushed.

"We've made steady progress and the prognosis for complete Spartina control is excellent," Heimer said. "Restoration of our treated meadows is the next step."

Heimer says WDFW has been just as tactical on other invasive species.

Purple loosestrife, a brackish and freshwater wetland plant with high seed production and long seed life, occupied

as much as 20,000 acres of the Columbia Basin's Winchester Wasteway in the early '90's. One of the control tools for purple loosestrife is release of *Galerucella*, a leaf-eating beetle that feeds on the plant. These "bio-control" releases, made in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Grant County, Columbia Irrigation Districts, and Washington

State University, have shown a dramatic decrease, specifically on WDFW's Desert Wildlife Area.

In areas where the loosestrife infestations are more scattered, such as the Yakima River, a WDFW cooperative arrangement with the Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board allows for spot treatment using herbicide to maintain control, Heimer reports.

*Phragmites*, derived from the Greek word for "fence," is a wetland grass with rapid growth that literally fences out other vegetation and virtual access to waterways. Outcompeting native biotypes, it is thought to be one of the most widely distributed plants in the world and is found in dozens of locations across Washington.

WDFW has teamed up with BOR and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to spray glyphosphate to control *Phragmites*, last year treating a total of 245 acres. WDFW plans to host a meeting for all major land managers in the Columbia Basin to alert them to the *Phragmites* threat and pool resources in a coordinated control program.

Other aquatic weeds that WDFW is working to eradicate include knotweeds (*Polygonum sp.*) in the Stillaguamish and Skagit watersheds; salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) in the Columbia Basin; yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), a popular ornamental that continues to be spread through plant dealers statewide; ricefield bulrush (*Scirpus mucronatus*), an invasive perennial sedge recently introduced to re-vegetate wetlands and so far found only on the Ridgefield

National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Washington; parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*), a popular pond plant threatening native wetlands; and Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*), a submergent flowering plant that spreads easily by stem fragments.

Heimer encourages communities to work with WDFW and other agencies to develop Coordinated Weed Management Area (CWMA) plans.

For example, the Chehalis River Weed Management Plan was initiated five years ago to improve weed control through better coordination of the many weed projects underway in that watershed by various entities.

Participants in the plan with WDFW and WSDA, under a Memorandum of Understanding, are the Quinault Indian Nation, Noxious Weed Boards of Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Lewis Counties, DNR, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Thurston Conservation District, Washington Department of Ecology, and the Chehalis River Council.

Heimer reports that the group has drafted a weed management plan that initially focuses on four aquatic plants — Brazilian elodea, knotweeds, parrotfeather, and purple loosestrife. The plan compiles and maps all aquatic weed locations from previous surveys.

"The plan offers a single information source for grant writers and operational continuity," he said. "Two grant-funded control projects were implemented with the help of the plan and the working group. Our goal is to be incorporated in the Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan."

Heimer says a CWMA involving three states – Washington, Idaho and Oregon — focuses on the Snake and Grand Ronde rivers and Hell's Canyon weed issues. The working group, including federal and state agencies, tribes and non-profit organizations from all three states, meets to develop education, survey, research and control projects. The Tri-State CWMA helps fund and coordinate the Strategic Weed Assessment Teams (SWAT) to tackle weed problems throughout the area.

## Stokes of Twisp named Wildlife Farmer of Year *cont. from page 2*

"The Stokes family installed fences to manage cattle grazing, installed water troughs to increase cattle grazing in previously ungrazed areas of their range, and implemented a rotational grazing schedule that has increased available forage for cows and wildlife," said Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District Manager. "Furthermore, they lose approximately 25 percent of their last alfalfa crop each year to deer browse from the largest mule deer herd in Washington."

The Stokes also added a second CRM plan a few years ago that addresses salmonid protection and irrigation rights.

They and some of their neighbors have removed five fish migration barriers, now allowing unrestricted steelhead access to more than seven miles of stream that were almost completely blocked for 80 years. Through their mutual cooperation and partnership with agencies, they have new irrigation diversions for their full water right and have significantly reduced their potential for enforcement under the Endangered Species Act.

WDFW Northcentral Regional Director Dennis Beich applauded the Stokes' provisions for all fish and wildlife, noting their efforts for salmon in particular as "a model we hope others will follow."

Vic Stokes said he was "humbled" when the award was presented to him and his wife Carrie at the Conservation Commission annual meeting in Yakima in December.

"First and foremost I'm a rancher," Stokes said, "but I am very happy to participate in the Coordinated Resource Management planning process, which I feel is what has earned me this award. The CRM philosophy of give and take is important for ranchers such as myself who have range permits, and it has worked very well for me and for the health of our watershed."

## New acquisition process initiated

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is implementing a new evaluation and review procedure for all land acquisition projects as part of its recently-published report, "Lands 20/20: A Clear Vision for the Future."

WDFW Lands Division Manager Mark Quinn explains the report was produced with input and review from many external partners to identify the values used to determine and prioritize future land acquisitions, and how those lands will be managed.

"The new process is based on a thorough internal review of proposed acquisition projects, before they are submitted to various grant sources for funding, to ensure consistency with these values and with the department's own strategic plan," Quinn said.

The review will also include input from the WDFW's Lands Management Advisory Council (LMAC), a volunteer group of citizen stakeholders.

The Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)

is the primary source of funds for WDFW development, recreation and habitat acquisition grants. Many of these grants are only available in even-numbered years, prior to the start of a new biennium.

"That means we'll be using this new process this year," Quinn said.

After going through a competitive process with other state and local agencies, the projects are scored and ranked and submitted to the legislature in 2007 for funding.

## Purchases add to wildlife areas

Several WDFW purchases have added major acreage to wildlife areas across the state in the past year.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area in Yakima County added 3,307 acres in the Tieton River Canyon, 25 miles northwest of Yakima. This \$2,840,185 acquisition was in partnership with the Nature Conservancy. It was funded by a grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, under the Critical Habitat category, and a Habitat Conservation Plan grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

West Foster Creek Wildlife Area in Douglas County added 2,288 acres of shrub-stepped habitat near Bridgeport for threatened sharp-tailed grouse. The \$839,000 purchase was funded by a

grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program under the Critical Habitat category.

Colockum, Quilomene, and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas in Kittitas County added 5,144 acres of shrub-steppe habitat in the first phase of a major conservation project in partnership with the Trust for Public lands. Ultimately up to about 17,000 acres in the

Skookumchuck watershed will be acquired to consolidate public ownership in contiguous acreage between the three wildlife areas. The \$1,800,000 initial phase of the project was funded by a \$500,000 state legislative appropriation for windpower mitigation and \$1,300,000 in mitigation funds from the Energy Facility Siting and Evaluation Committee.

This program receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the policy of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to adhere to the following: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, please contact the WDFW ADA Coordinator at 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 or write to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203