

Wildlife Program

Week of June 1 – June 7, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Headquarters Wolf Activities

Trapping Update: Carnivore staff trapped the Profanity Peak pack for nearly two weeks and caught one wolf on May 31. The wolves are still in the vicinity, but have been leery of the traps. We plan to come back later in the year. We have set traps in the Dirty Shirt pack area and are looking for fresh sign in the Carpenter Ridge pack area. Washington State University was unsuccessful with trapping the Lookout pack. This pack appears to be traveling widely in their territory. We will continue to monitor this pack for future trapping efforts.

GMAC Meeting: Wolf Policy Lead Dave Ware gave a presentation on the status of ungulates in Washington and their relationship to wolves. With the data collected by WDFW, there is no indication that there has been much of an impact of wolves on ungulate populations at this stage of wolf recovery. The presentation will soon be made available on the WDFW website.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolf Management: Biologist Fitkin checked a remote camera deployed in the Upper Methow for wolves. The camera captured only deer, squirrels, and martens over the last month or so. The site received fresh scent attractant and will likely remain deployed for several more weeks. This season's initial attempt to capture Lookout Pack members has ended unsuccessfully. WSU and/or WDFW crews may make another attempt in early summer if enough activity is noted to suggest a reasonable chance of success. Specialist Heilhecker met with the rancher to sign the DPCA-L. The range rider is scheduled to arrive at the end of this week. Specialist Heilhecker purchased wolf trapping equipment from a list supplied by Wolf Specialist Becker. Trapping equipment will be used to respond to wolf conflict situations.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Northern Goshawk Survey: Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince and Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Manager Daro Palmer followed up on a report of a new goshawk nest on Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. The active nest was located and an adult with one chick was observed in the nest. A follow-up visit will occur later in the month to determine the fledging outcome for the juvenile.

Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Lowe continued ground telemetry on bighorn sheep in the Lincoln and Whitestone areas to monitor lamb production and survival. Lamb counts have been consistent over the last three weeks. Several locals have taken an interest and have also been watching and reporting their observations.



Collared ewes in the Lincoln subgroup of the Lincoln Cliffs herd

Wildlife Areas

SCWA Northern Goshawk Survey: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer accompanied Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince into the northern goshawk territory on the Sherman Creek WLA. This territory was identified and protected in 2009 during the forest thinning unit layout of a habitat improvement project. Palmer had a report from a Forest Service contractor of an adult northern goshawk in the area earlier this spring and the location of a previously unknown alternate nest in the territory. Prince and Palmer confirmed occupancy and reproduction in this territory for the first time since 2009.

Asotin Creek, WA Rare Plant Survey: Biologist Woodall, Tech Steveson, and Interns Price and Surmeyer all participated in Spaldings Catchfly Silene surveys and monitored at the Smoothing Iron Unit.





Spalding's Catchfly Monitoring

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbit Capture/Release Activities: After a week off the team began capture and release activities again this week. We captured 15 rabbits at the Beezley Hills breeding enclosure, including 13 new kits, one new adult (kit that eluded capture in previous years), and one recap adult. The two adults were given a PIT tag and retained in the breeding enclosure. Ten of the kits were released to the wild and three were placed in the nursery, as they were under the 125 g weight requirement for release. We also captured 10 of 16 rabbits placed in the nursery during previous captures. Seven of these rabbits were also released to the wild. One was retained in the nursery as it was still too small, and the other two were taken to the large enclosure to be retained there for breeding.

A big thank you goes out to TNC staff and volunteers (Robing Stanton, Chuck Warner, and Emma Hoskins) for their help. We also received help from journalists Rich Landers and Beth Geiger, and landowner Peter Lancaster. To date, 215 new kits have been captured out of the breeding enclosures. One hundred and eighty nine of these have been released to the wild, including 150 on the Sagebrush Flat recovery area and 39 at the Beezley Hills recovery area. We are grateful to TNC volunteer Hannah Letinich for sharing her awesome photos with us. Here are just a few, including the money shot of a rabbit feeding in the top of a sagebrush!



Northern Leopard Frogs: Biologists Finger, E. Duvuvuei, and O. Duvuvuei assessed the status of levees in the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area during the average historical peak water level on Potholes Reservoir to ensure functionality. Levees were constructed in 2008 to isolate ponds and aid in fish removal efforts. All levees remain intact, but some additional materials should be added to a couple levees to ensure they are not breached in the future.



Constructed levee in the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area in need of additional materials to ensure it's protected from a future breach – Photo by R. Finger



Contoured area of Northern Leopard Frog Management Area intended as breeding habitat. This contour is functioning appropriately by providing short emergent vegetation for egg mass attachment – Photo by R. Finger

Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basin Weed Management: Assistant Manager Bechtold treated roughly 15 acres of Perennial Pepperweed at the Spud Field and Mansfield Pond areas of the Gloyd Seeps Unit, monitored the Dense Nesting Cover project fields, and prepped for the annual spring aerial herbicide treatment tentatively scheduled for next week. Assistant Manager Eidson spent time this week preparing for the upcoming spring aerial weed treatment effort by surveying areas that have been sprayed in the past and checking new areas that are potential targets for treatment. Significant effort was focused in Lower Crab Creek and along the Winchester Wasteway and Winchester Reserve. Assistant Manager Eidson spent a day treating breakthrough weeds at the Winchester Regulated Access Area. Weeds treated include Kochia, Russian Thistle, Canada Thistle, and Pepperweed. Assistant Manager Eidson and Assistant Manager Cole spent a day treating Yellow Flag Iris and Phragmites on the Crab Creek arm of Potholes Reservoir from a boat. The high water level hindered the treatment of the Iris, but allowed for access to many backwaters that are normally inaccessible, so multiple groups of Phragmites were treated. Access Manager Graves continued efforts spot spraying weeds. Some break through has occurred since the spring residual application.

Methow Illegal Wood Theft Assessment: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass was notified by enforcement that illegal wood theft had occurred over the weekend on the Methow Wildlife Area. Bass completed an assessment of timber stolen from the wildlife area, its commercial value, and its ecosystem habitat value. Unfortunately this group removed valuable stabilizing habitat from a watershed that has been unstable following fires, as well as habitat that has become rare in the area due to wildfires. Bass submitted this assessment to the officers managing the case, Dan Christensen and Justin Trautman.

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock rechecked a few Douglas County SAFE fields, where the density of crested wheatgrass was far greater than desirable. She wanted to see if the native grass density had improved since her last round of checks. While native grass density is below where we had hoped, it is unclear whether landholders will need to redo these SAFE fields. Biologist Comstock also created forb polygons for SAFE fields, which will have forbs seeded into this fall. Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent most of the week looking at SAFE fields with issues. With all of the spring moisture, Cereal Rye problems are a hard thing to get ahead of. Private Lands Biologist Braaten was able to see that landowners were chemically wicking some fields, while others were delayed due to rains.



Cereal Rye in and out of control – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

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

Wildlife Management

Migratory Bird Banding: Biologist Finger banded a young peregrine for a falconer. The falcon was captured at Frenchmen Coulee. With Region 2 assistance from Enforcement, Access, Private Lands, and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, Biologists E. Duvuvuei, O. Duvuvuei, and Finger banded 134 Western Canada geese in the Coulee Corridor area. Nine recaptured adults were banded in the area in 2009, 2011, and 2013. Thanks to all who were able to lend a hand and make this a successful effort! Biologist E. Duvuvuei continued to maintain bait piles for Mourning Doves at multiple sites throughout Grant County and banded the first ten birds of the season. She scouted for goose capture locations, coordinated with volunteers for next week's line up of goose captures, and did some trapping equipment maintenance.



S. Dougherty and E. Duvuvuei rounding up the smallest goslings to ensure they are not trampled during banding efforts at Park Lake. Not sure what kind of pose Dougherty is going for but it's impressive nonetheless – Photo by R. Finger

Wildlife Areas

Americans with Disabilities: Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger, with assistance from Access Manager Harmon, installed the two ADA blinds at Frenchmen Ponds Regulated Access Area.



One of two ADA blinds placed at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area – Photo by R. Finger

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

Wildlife Areas



First Annual Dave Brittell Memorial Trail Hike/Fundraiser: Manager Haug and the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area hosted the first annual Dave Brittell Memorial Trail Hike on Saturday to raise scholarship funds for local students seeking a degree in Wildlife Biology or a related field. The hike (on National Trails Day) was well attended with 38 hikers traversing the nearly ten mile trail from Sinlahekin Headquarters to Hunters Camp north of Fish Lake. Region 1 Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera organized and directed the event which brought together family, friends, and

WDFW staff from around the state. The hike raised an impressive \$2000 for the scholarship fund for the 1st year – a number that's sure to grow in upcoming years. We look forward to many more successful hikes in memory of Dave and his lasting legacy.



From Top to Bottom – post-hike BBQ gathering near Sinlahekin HQ, Steve Pozzanghera presenting \$2000 check to the Brittell family, and the post-BBQ fire near Connors Lake – Photos by Justin Haug

Methow Floodplain Site: Assistant Manager Sample took part in a field trip event with Watershed Watchers, an outdoor education based program, including two third grade classes from the local elementary school. The

field trip took place on part of the Methow Wildlife Area property known as the Floodplain Site. The Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, along with Methow Natives, have been working with WDFW on fish habitat improvements in and along the Methow River, as well as an extensive tree/shrub planting effort. This project has been ongoing for several years. A total of about 40 students were divided into four groups and rotated around four stations throughout the day. Stations included a discussion of native plantings, salmon recovery efforts at the site, and non-native plant species. Assistant Manager Sample led the Native/Non-Native station, discussing the benefits of native species and disadvantages of non-natives, invasives, and noxious weeds. To conclude each session, students were challenged to pull by hand as many common mullein plants as they could find for a handful of jelly beans.



Methow Wildlife Area Floodplain Site, Watershed Watchers third grade field trip, learning about native and non-native plant species and hand pulling mullein – Photos taken May 29 by Anna Sample



Road Repair: Fidel invested three days working his CAT magic to repair our access road on the Wilson parcel adjacent to Bridgeport. The road suffered significant damage thanks to a short but intense thunderstorm the afternoon of May 29. In 40 minutes the town of Bridgeport received about 0.60 inches of rain that resulted in localized flooding, including debris flows down city streets and through yards. Our access road was left with deep gulleys that exposed rocky rill in some locations. With assistance from Virgilio, Fidel used our CAT D-4, 60 yards of decomposed granite from a nearby quarry, and our Kubota with the landscape rake attached to fully regrade and repair about 1.6 miles.



Wilson access road following deluge – Photo by Dan Peterson

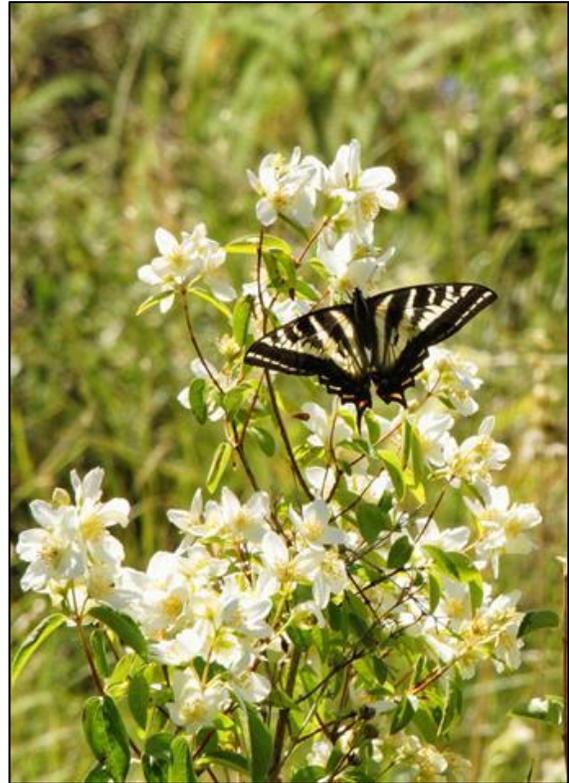


Repaired by Fidel – Photo by Dan Peterson

Recreational Opportunities: Upper elevations are now accessible and alive with color and activity. Now is a great time to get out and enjoy the high country before the bugs reach a fever pitch.



Upper Methow River – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Pale Tiger Swallowtail on mock-orange near Sinlahekin headquarters – Photo by Justin Haug



Basketball bambi – Photo by Scott Fitkin

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area:

Manager Winegeart finished ‘cow off’ livestock forage monitoring in the Vantage Highway pasture. Several cow elk were also observed, some with new calves.

New elk calves observed on the Quilomene WLA



Wildlife Management

Bat Monitoring Project: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed

sampling locations and prepared supplies for the current WDFW bat monitoring project. Fidorra coordinated with USFWS biologists to ensure WDFW time was used efficiently to collect novel data which would complement USFWS monitoring projects in the state. Several landowners were contacted to arrange access to properties and private roads. Fidorra will begin to deploy bat monitoring devices in District 4 and 5 once data cards are received in the coming week.

Burrowing Owl Banding: District Biologist Fidorra met with volunteers to band burrowing owls at WDFW artificial burrow sites. Two clutches and two adults were captured this week, bringing the total number of owls banded in Franklin County this year to 31 adults and 60 juveniles.

Canada Goose Banding: District Biologist Fidorra began to contact and organize volunteers to assist in the Tri-cities’ Canada goose banding on Friday, June 26.

Wildlife Conflict Section Teleconference: District Biologist Fidorra participated in the monthly teleconference call with the Wildlife Conflict Section. Items discussed included: training, WAC development, Policy and SOP development, cooperative fencing projects, equipment needs, and RFQQs for range riders and agricultural crop appraisers.

Pollinator Plantings: Private Lands Bio Stutzman met with three landowners to go over the seed mixes and recommended prep for their pollinator plantings. A few small changes to acreages were required, but overall each cooperator was satisfied. Stutzman also worked with the landowners to secure plant material bids by providing a list of vendors and making some calls. Bids will go to the BCD this week.

Shrub Planting: Stutzman was able to find a home on private land for some extra shrubs that the Sunnyside-Snake River WMA had available. Stutzman delivered the shrubs on Friday and they will be added to a riparian planting this week.

Western Gray Squirrels: Biologist Bernatowicz checked the hair-snare tubes for the first four transects. There were more bear hits than small mammal. No western gray squirrel hair was found.

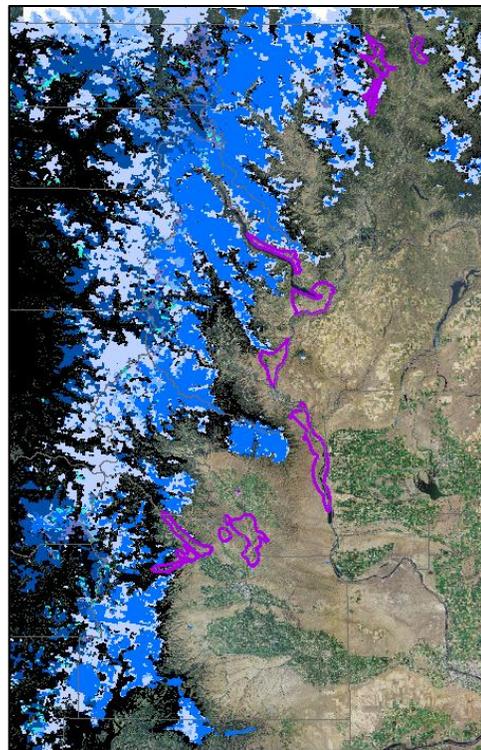
Mountain Goats: Biologist Bernatowicz sent maps, data forms, and passes to all volunteers surveying goats in the district. There was a fair amount of communication with volunteers and last minute changes to routes.

Mule Deer Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed the draft Mule Deer Plan and relevant literature, and is working on comments.

Other: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to ten incidents from the public, mostly regarding injured/orphaned wildlife. A newly fledged barn owl was taken by a citizen to the emergency vet clinic. The bird originally seemed dazed, but was active by morning. The owl seemed to be in good shape, so it was released locally.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore was requested by Bighorn Sheep Section Lead Rich Harris to update Washington's bighorn sheep habitat use model. The current model resulted from research that took place in Idaho and was extrapolated to Washington's landscape. This model has been evaluated using WDFW's collar data and performs extremely well, but overestimates habitat at higher elevations in the Cascade Range. Harris was hoping to find a defensible method to reduce this overestimate. After researching the issue Harris, Moore decided to use mountain snowpack that is present during the peak of lambing to restrict the Idaho models estimates. Moore used MODIS, Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer data collected from the Terra and Aqua satellites to delineate snowpack across the state. Moore reviewed data within a window of April 1 to April 10 from 2005-2014. The images for six years were of good quality and used to build a snowpack data layer. The snowpack data will be applied as a mask to reduce the Idaho bighorn sheep modeling extent.

Multiple years of snow data (in shades of blue) compared to bighorn sheep herd home range estimates in purple



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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris checked on the Mt. Clemans Archer's shoot, permitted for the Mellotte area. Even with the hot weather, they had almost 150 archers from around the area participate in the event. Other than a few rattlesnakes and ticks, all went well.

Archers coming back to camp after shooting



Practice Range and 3-D targets used for the shoot

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Assistant Manager Berry prepared for the Oak Creek Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) clean-up day. About 15 volunteers drove roads on the wildlife area picking up roadside and camp site trash. There was a pretty big haul filling up the five-ton truck. That afternoon, more WEC members showed up for a BBQ and WEC meeting. Huffman assisted with WEC members in ordering new vests online for the volunteers to wear while working at Oak Creek. The new fluorescent vests will replace the baby blue vests they have been wearing for years and make the volunteers more identifiable to the public.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: NRW Nnanabu, NRT2 Kaelber, Assistant Manager Buser, and Assistant Manager Sak hosted 45 fourth graders from Chief Kamiakin Elementary School. The students planted a total of 200 shrubs and also completed nature mapping around one of the wildlife area wetlands.



Chief Kamiakin fourth graders learn how to map one of the wildlife area wetlands



Future biologists hard at work on the Sunnyside HQ Unit

Wildlife Management

Elk Issues Surveyed: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand visited and surveyed for elk damage issues on a large irrigated farm with crops such as apples, pumpkin, wheat, and peppers. So far, very little elk activity was observed, but with warmer and dryer conditions in the forecast, it is likely that elk damage will occur. Nonlethal hazing equipment will be utilized, as well as damage permit hunting.

Rattlesnake Hills Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continues to monitor elk activity in the Rattlesnake Hills area. A review of picture images recovered from a deployed trail camera showed a reduction in the total number of elk leaving Hanford for private wheat lands, most likely due to hunting pressure in the area. All images with elk were captured in the early morning hours between 12 -5am.

Deer Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted one hazing operation at two large orchards in southern Benton County for deer damage issues. Heavy human presence from workers harvesting crops and the use of non-lethal deterrents in the area are helping reduce deer damage impacts.

Taneum Creek Elk Use: Conflict Specialist Wetzel checked the electric fence across Taneum Creek for elk use. The fence has been partially effective, but the elk are determined to get through it and into the agriculture areas to the east. Conflict Specialist Wetzel spent part of two days repairing electric fladry fence this week and hazed elk from the fence area.

Elk looking at electric fence

Outlook Area Deer Damage: District Biologist Bernatowicz and Conflict Specialist Wetzel made a field visit to a cherry orchard in the Outlook area that had been experiencing deer browsing and mechanical damage. The orchard manager will try applying SeaDust until the permit season starts.



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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor met with ATG Torts Investigator Engle and gave him a field tour of pertinent sites related to the 2014 Cottonwood #2 fire for his tort claim investigation.

Wenas WLA Target Shooting: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor met with Regional and Olympia staff to discuss a draft proposal and the next steps for addressing target shooting on the Wenas WLA. Confer Morris also pulled together some preliminary development costs, based on material estimates provided by TRS and CAMP.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt arranged for the transport of hay from the Revere Unit of the Swanson Lake Wildlife Area to our Joe Watt barn compound. It should be hauled sometime next week, and the trucker will also re-stack some hay already at Watt along with it. Once complete, we'll have Tarp-it cover the entire stack.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met up with Olympia and Regional staff for a quick tour of the Cowiche area, looking at places that are a priority for protection. Huffman took the group out to Hatton Road to look at the multiple parcels and the new North Fork Cowiche Property. In the area, several deer and a spike elk were observed.

Gate Installation: Forester Mackey worked with Yakima Construction Shop crew to install two gates. One gate was installed in the Rock Creek Unit on a road that was partially abandoned, with the remainder being closed to motor vehicles through the PAM/SEPA process last year. The second gate was installed on Clemans Mountain in an area that is closed annually each winter to motor vehicles. The new gate will increase compliance as the area had previously only been posted with signs that were routinely violated.



New gate installed on the Rock Creek Unit



Yakima Construction Shop preparing to install a gate post on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area on Clemans Mountain



Gate partially installed on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. The new gate will block motor vehicles from entering the winter closure area from the top of Clemans Mountain.



Colockum Wildlife Area: Preparation continues on the Colockum for several road maintenance projects. CAMP crews are busy moving materials in for culvert replacements, culvert removals, and bridge construction. The remoteness of the sites and narrow Colockum roads makes it a challenge to get materials onsite. The crew moved the long bridge sections into the Tarpiscan by attaching them to a wheeled dolly and lifting the rear of the bridge with an excavator on tight corners. Colockum staff participated in preconstruction meetings this week for the bridge installation and culvert work with engineers and crews doing the work.

CAMP crews move a bridge section and equipment to the lower N. Fork Tarpiscan Creek site

Road Closures: Assistant manager Hagan had signs printed and laminated in preparation for making temporary road closures to alert the public to road work being done. Manager Lopushinsky filled out a PAM form for road closures and forwarded it on to Regional Program Manager (RPM) McCorquodale, Public Affairs, Regional Enforcement, and Regional office staff.

Tarpiscan Creek Road Work:

Manager Lopushinsky worked on an application to make changes to the non-green dot road under the BPA powerline in section 16, Tarpiscan Creek. As part of the culvert removal in this section, we will need to re-route the existing road and create a ford crossing.



Kristen Kuykendall (CAMP) inspects an 8 ft. diameter culvert to be installed in Brewton Gulch

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom met with Assistant Manager Sak, Anthony Sanich of CAMP, and HazBos Contractors to discuss continuing requirements for completion of the Sunnyside HQ shop construction. HazBos will acquire the required submittals and work with Assistant Manager Sak to provide all needed documentation to CAMP. The shop is on schedule for a June 25 completion date.

Wildfire Damage Conference Call: Manager Bjornstrom attended a conference call with Assistant AG Shorin, RPM McCorquodale, Habitat Biologist Ritter, and Paul Dahmer to discuss the options related to an insurance settlement agreement between WDFW and Mutual of Enumclaw regarding the damages incurred in 2014 spring wildfires.

Wildlife Area Signs: Manager Bjornstrom picked up WDFW sign renderings that will be used for hunter education purposes. Sgt. Fulton had a request from a hunter education class for current wildlife area signs to display in the classroom as part of their educational program. Manager Bjornstrom had copies of signs made for their use and presented them to Sgt. Fulton.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Peregrine Falcon Nestling Take: Biologist DeBruyn banded two young peregrines taken as nestlings by area falconers. DeBruyn had advised them on legal take parameters and requirements and everything was done according to regulations. Marine detachment officers Rosenberger and Koontz helped by transporting DeBruyn to Friday Harbor to band one of the chicks so as to eliminate the need for a stressful trip to town for the young falcon. Team Mill Creek also helped out by expediting transfer of a band for the second chick so she could be placed with surrogate parents in a timely manner.



Young Peregrine ready to be banded

Forest Carnivores/Citizen Science: Biologist DeBruyn coordinated with two volunteers to place trail cameras in an area near Mt. Baker that has a potential for interesting carnivore occurrence. DeBruyn also attended a volunteer training session put on by B.C. Parks to train a group of people to run trail cameras in the Upper Skagit Valley to monitor for wolves, grizzly bears, and other carnivores. This is an area adjacent to a long running wolf monitoring effort by District 14 staff. Relationships established at the meeting will go a long way towards coordinating the two projects.

Common Loon Monitoring: Biologist Anderson confirmed a second attempt nesting at an area lake. The pair had nested on a free floating log previously, but failed. Anderson visited another known nest and determined it failed. Otter scat was on the nest stump. The pair was still present and quite tied into the nest site still. A second attempt will likely occur somewhere on the lake. According to local logging crews, a number of float planes have been putting down on the territorial lake with birds reacting in a disturbed manner. Anderson visited a number of other use sites as light allowed for survey purposes.



Loon on shoreline nest – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW

Raptor management: Biologist Anderson, per Seattle Code requiring WDFW input, provided review of a proposed Osprey platform for the University of Washington Urban Natural Area. Birds have been attempting to nest at Husky Stadium, as well as nearby at the old MOHAI site, now being used as an equipment staging area for an SR520 project. Biologist Anderson provided updates and suggestions for a local researcher that was interested and willing to survey some of the known area wildland falcon eyries.

Lowland Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra surveyed sites at a known lowland pika area in the Stillaguamish valley. A single trail camera was placed at a talus site with potential habitat, but no detections at the present time. Field conditions prevented the placement of additional cameras.

Breeding Waterfowl Data: Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed transcription of this spring's aerial waterfowl breeding survey and submitted the data to Specialist Evenson.

Wildlife Monitoring: Biologist Yarborough met with the Baker River Terrestrial Resource Implementation Group to discuss a variety of wildlife monitoring projects that Puget Sound Energy is working on. The group also discussed land acquisition options for the North Cascades Elk Herd core area.

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing and trail maintenance has resumed at the unit. A Master Hunter volunteer is clearing blow-downs from last winter's storms along the interior roads and trails.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm followed up with WDFW Enforcement to clean up a homeless camp that was reported last week. Leftover trash and debris was cleaned up.

Lake Terrell Barley Field Prep Work: Natural Resource Tech Deyo completed final prep work on the rest of the barley fields at Lake Terrell. All fields were disked and harrowed in preparation for planting. At the end of the week, 60 acres of barley were planted, and Deyo disked in the seed. Fifteen of these acres were funded using Duck Stamp funds. This barley will provide important winter feed for waterfowl.



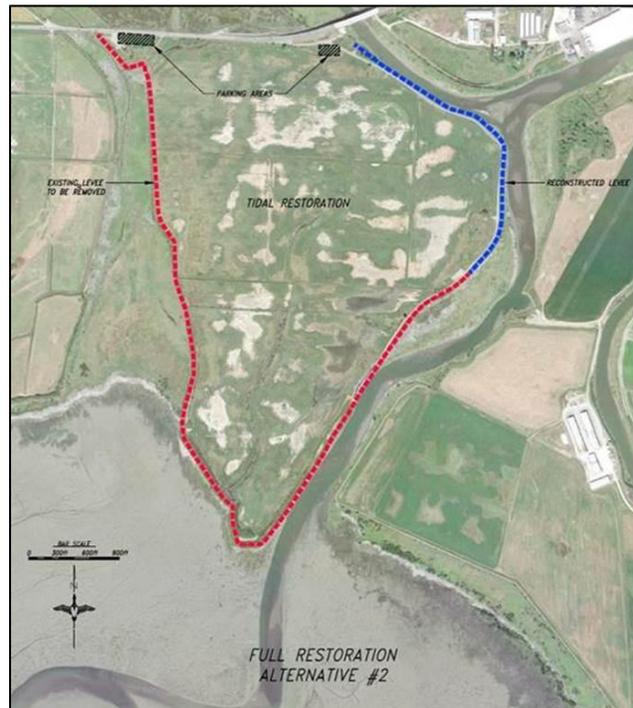
Lake Terrell barley planting

Port of Bellingham Wetland Mitigation Project: Manager Kessler coordinated with the managers from the Port of Bellingham on the wetland mitigation project on the Tennant Lake Unit. This project improved and enhanced wetlands on the Tennant Lake Unit to mitigate impacts to wetlands during expansion at the Bellingham Airport. Manager Kessler mowed 15 acres of reed canary grass in the Phase 2 area of the project. This mowing will prevent the reed canary grass from going to seed. The remaining 15 acres of grass will be mowed this week.

Lake Terrell Waterfowl Trapping: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued trapping and banding waterfowl on the Lake Terrell Unit. He has trapped a total of 120 individual waterfowl this spring.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The Leque Island project team announced WDFW's preferred design alternative, which will be moved forward to the next project phase of additional studies, design, and permitting. Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent an announcement to the Leque Island email list and the Public Affairs Office distributed a news release. To be added to the Leque Island email list, contact Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

The preferred design involves removing the majority of the levees around the island (red dashed line), which will restore tidal influence from Port Susan Bay to approximately 250-acres of new estuary habitat that will benefit all fish and wildlife species that rely on estuaries and saltwater



marsh as part of their life cycles. A linear section of dike will be retained adjacent to the Stillaguamish River (blue dashed line) to assure the river remains in its current channel. Elevated trails and other recreation features will be developed in the next design phase with input from stakeholders. More information is available on the project webpage at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.

Private Lands/Access Management

Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement Coordination: Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Otto on Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement efforts across Region 4. Biologist Hans and NRT Otto also spent time coordinating field and logistic efforts with farmers across the region on these matters. So far, several properties are on schedule for planting barley. These sites will provide valued resources to migratory birds this coming winter.

Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement field operations being applied in Snohomish County. This site will provide much needed forage to migratory birds during their winter migrations.



Partner Coordination: Biologist Hans attended a Washington Audubon meeting in Seattle. The speakers at this event discussed the importance of collaboration between conservationists, hunters, and the agriculture industry.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Survey – Volunteer Effort: Biologist Anderson worked with volunteers from WA State, Oregon, and British Columbia to coordinate a meeting with them and provide materials (maps, forms, directions, specific orientation for their area) for a boot mountain goat survey this past weekend. Volunteers covered I-90 to US 2 on the King County side. Parties are reporting back this week. Goats were observed even though conditions were quite hot which may have pushed animals into timber. It took much more time than expected to coordinate what is really a snapshot index of occurrence effort.

Washington State University Black Bear Forage Study: Biologist Anderson provided suggestions on a number of mast resources for potential examination in an upcoming bear forage study as part of a PhD candidate's work at WSU. The student is working in King County examining various aspects of bear ecology.

Sky Valley Recreation Coalition: Milner attended the bi-monthly meeting. Discussion revolved around frustration over closed gates on public lands, as well as the slow pace of governmental decisions in general.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management: The WDFW Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Team met to discuss updates on the effort to secure additional waterfowl forage and walk-in waterfowl hunting lands to offset impacts from ongoing estuary restoration projects. Prior to the meeting, Program Manager Link, WLA Manager Rotton, and Project Coordinator Brokaw met with the Executive Director of Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland to discuss this effort, answer questions, and plan the next steps.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw received notice from the Department of Ecology that the permit application to secure a Construction Stormwater permit is complete, notices were distributed in the newspaper, and the permit will be issued as early as June 29.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit WLA Manager Rotton met on the site with WDFW construction staff and the project coordinator and engineer from the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to discuss construction details and the budget.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Cosgrove finished field preparations for barley and fava beans on the Island Unit. Natural Resource Scientist (NRS) Meis coordinated supply delivery to the site for ferry operation. NRT Cosgrove and NRS Meis coordinated with volunteers to ferry planting equipment (including fertilizer, barley seed bins, and a grain drill) to the Island Unit.

Island Unit: NRT Cosgrove, with assistance from NRS Meis, planted about 40 acres of barley and ten acres of fava beans on the Island Unit. Cosgrove applied fertilizer with the spin spreader to one field of millet and yellow nutsedge on the Island Unit. Cosgrove and Meis coordinated with volunteers to ferry planting equipment off the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Meis assisted with the planting of ten acres of corn on the Samish Unit. The plantings for this season are complete.

Leque Island Unit: Meis coordinated supplies and assisted with the planting of 45 acres of barley.

Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunt Management: Natural Resource Technician Otto scouted the North Skagit and Monroe areas to ensure gates were in working order and checked roads for current bear damage. Biologist Hans responded to a call from the Department of Natural Resources regarding three gate issues in the Monroe Hunt Unit. Upon checking each gate, all were found to be in

working order. Supervisor Caldwell and Biologist Hans met with a representative for Sierra Pacific Industries. The group discussed status, issues, possible land inclusions, and how to increase hunter success in the future.

The Nature Conservancy Meeting: Biologist Hans and Supervisor Caldwell met with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) staff on waterfowl quality hunt coordination efforts for this coming waterfowl season. The Nature Conservancy provides one no cost site for public use. This site is a premier hunting location. Private Land Access staff are excited that TNC has expressed a willingness to partner with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife again this coming season.

Skagit Endangered Species and Waterfowl Working Group Meeting: Biologist Hans and Supervisor Caldwell met with Skagit Endangered Species and Waterfowl Working Group members to discuss several agenda items. The group is moving forward with processes that will provide sustainable hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities in Skagit 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

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a landowner who was concerned about decreased grass hay yields due to elk grazing on his property. The landowner has had 12-14 bull elk utilizing his property on a frequent basis. Specialist Witman is working on providing hazing options and fertilizer to offset crop loss. Specialist Witman received a report of an injured horse that was euthanized due to a broken leg. The landowner was concerned it was caused by a bull elk. The landowner did not document any of the injuries and disposed of the animal prior to calling. The landowner was advised to call if the bull elk returns to the property. Specialist Witman and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell finished building a temporary electrified fence in the Acme area.

Depredation Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call from a landowner in Whatcom County who has had five sheep killed by depredation since February. The landowner called after finding one of their last two remaining sheep had been killed that morning. Specialist Witman responded and performed a necropsy finding injuries consistent with a cougar depredation. Enforcement also responded to the scene and installed a trap per the landowner's request.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Law Enforcement deployed a cougar trap on private property after confirming that a recent livestock mortality was caused by cougar

Bear Timber Damage Sub-Committee Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Smith, and Wildlife Conflict

Supervisor Caldwell attended a meeting with other sub-committee members to discuss several topics related to bear damage on industrial and small forest landowner timberland property. Several keynote speakers presented information to the group on different perspectives related to bear damage. During these presentations, speakers addressed the cause and effect of different actions caused by bears and management strategies. The committee continues to work on ideas, address damage, and provided opportunities for recreational users.

Wildlife Areas

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Bran Boehm continues to work with WDFW Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to sign up community and Master Hunter volunteers for upcoming field work. Master Hunter volunteers are currently assisting with a parking lot monitoring project on the four pheasant release sites. Two other volunteers are working on net pen maintenance and pressure washed the loading room, bird crates, and feeders.

Parking Area Maintenance: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with WDFW Region 4 Access Program Supervisor Derek Hacker and the CAMP Road Crew to complete parking lot grading at the Crescent Lake and Stillwater parking lots. Additional gravel was brought in to fill low spots and large pot holes that had developed over the years.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton and Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw toured the breach of the North Leque Dike to photograph any changes to the site. The neighboring landowner has contacted the CAMP program regarding some previous work near the breach.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Hans began working on contracts for the 2016 season. She also began work to edit the data for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's GoHunt website.

Diversity Site: Natural Resource Technician Otto performed general maintenance at the Whidbey Island diversity site.

Lake Campbell Complaint: Department staff addressed a complaint from a neighboring land owner with a property line fence located along the west side of our fishing access at Lake Campbell. Region 4 access staff removed blackberries and rose bushes along the fence line to clean up the problems associated with vegetation growing through the fence. The project started on June 4 and will be completed in July once staff members are back from vacation. Staff involved with the project included John Evans Jr. and Derek Hacker.



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

Online Training: Biologist Yarborough and DeBruyn completed the Washington State Purchasing and Procurement Ethics online training. DeBruyn also completed sexual harassment awareness training.

Performance and Development Plan: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager

Boehm finalized his Comprehensive Action Plan as the completion of the Leadership Training Program.

Training: Supervisor Caldwell spent time familiarizing Biologist Hans with the online Private Land Access Program administration sites. They covered GoHunt, Hunt by Reservation, and mapping/access site establishment, maintenance, and organization. Biologist Hans will begin updating these sites as agreements are made with private landowners for the upcoming 2015-16 hunting seasons. Biologist Hans completed the required Washington State Purchasing and Procurement Ethics and Washington State Small Purchases training. Biologist Hans began reading the training manual to prepare for her upcoming Motorboat Operation Certification Course.

Cross Program Coordination: Natural Resource Technician Otto and Deyo coordinated with the Fish Program on picking-up the Private Land Access Program’s flatbed truck. This vehicle is mainly used by the Private Lands Program but they share the vehicle for a few months to help folks out with fish monitoring.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Columbia River Streaked-horned Lark Surveys: In cooperation with Wildlife Diversity Division and the Center for Natural Lands Management, Biologists Stephens and Holman conducted a second lark survey on an island in the lower Columbia River. Streaked-horned larks require open or very-lightly vegetated habitats for nesting. The prairies of south Puget Sound, Long Beach Peninsula, and dredge-spoil islands and nearby uplands in the lower Columbia provide suitable habitat. The streaked-horned lark is listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Endangered by Washington State due to their low population numbers and loss and degradation of habitat.

Black-tailed Deer Research: Regional Wildlife Biologists continued with fawn searches for this year's work on the black-tailed deer research project. During the May-June birth period, all adult females associated with each study cluster will be monitored frequently and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, three adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive with functional satellite and VHF collars. One fawn associated with this study cluster has been captured and fitted with a radio collar. Currently in the Washougal cluster, two adult does are alive and have functional equipment. Biologists Bergh and Doorly captured twin fawns from one of the study does in the Washougal study cluster this week. The biologists were clued in to the fact that the doe may have had her fawns because her movements declined and her radio-collared fawn from last year (now a yearling) had recently separated from her. Morphological measurements were taken and the fawns were outfitted with small, expandable radio-collars that emit a VHF signal and communicate with the doe’s radio-collared fawn when in range of her. These fawns will be monitored for survival for the next year as part of a larger study on black-tailed deer survival, reproduction, and habitat use. By the end of the week, one of the fawn’s collars indicated that it was in mortality mode. It was determined that the fawn had been predated by a bobcat.



Fawns captured on a very rainy day

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Establishment of Photo Monitoring Sites: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand spent a day this past week reestablishing ten previous photo point locations and establishing 23 new locations in the wetland areas of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. These photo point locations will be used as part of an effort to monitor vegetation trends, management practices, and results over time. Coordinates, heading, center of photo target, and site description were recorded for each site to better establish a long standing documentation of site conditions. Each site will be visited and photographed three times a year and each wetland will be evaluated at each visit for site characteristics and/or vegetation.



V-3 Wetland in the Vancouver Lake Unit



West Rookery Wetland in the South Unit

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project: Phase II of this project was completed and Manager Van Leuven inspected the 28.6 acre unit along with DNR Forester Lennon and representatives from the contractor. The treated area turned out as desired and will provide a much safer working environment for fire fighters should it be necessary to stop an advancing wildfire. The bidding opportunity for Phase III of the project closed on June 4, but bids have not been reviewed yet. Technician Davis and Manager Van Leuven began laying out Phase IV in the field on Friday.



Fuels Reduction Project Phase II

Bluebird Nest Box Survey: Technician Davis conducted the annual bluebird nest box survey on the Soda Springs Unit. Of 20 serviceable boxes, 15 were occupied by bluebirds. One was occupied by tree swallows and four were unoccupied. This equals the highest usage by bluebirds in any year. Last year was also a good year with 15 boxes utilized by bluebirds.

Grazing Monitoring: Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis both monitored water sources and grazing activity on the Soda Springs Unit. Davis checked water troughs almost every day and water supplies are presently stable. The only problem was one cow found inside a fenced enclosure and it was driven out. Certain areas of the pasture have reached the utilization limit and the permittee has been notified that the animals need to be moved off the WDFW pasture next week.

Lightning Strikes and Fire: A thunderstorm moved across the Soda Springs Unit in the very early morning of June 1 and struck at least four trees. One strike ignited a fire, which was put out by DNR. One of the other strikes blew apart a large old oak tree. The tree was about 26 - 30 inches in diameter and sound to the core. All the bark was blown off the lower five feet of the trunk and the trunk was split down the middle to the ground.



Lightning strike oak tree

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE.

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife conflict specialist Conklin spent most of her week verifying bear damage to industrial timber lands.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Study Satsop/Mason Clusters: In 2009, WDFW initiated a study of the effects of forest management practices on black-tailed deer reproduction. Two of eight study sites are represented in District 15: Mason and Satsop. The Mason cluster includes seven GPS collared does, while the Satsop cluster has four. An objective of this study involves the capture and radio-collaring of fawns associated with radio-collared does. Biologist Murphie, along with volunteers, spent time this week checking does for fawning activity. He reports collaring a total of ten fawns associated with seven does thus far this season. Follow-up searches for additional fawns are often conducted when only one fawn is collared for a particular doe. These searches are called “twin checks” and may be conducted 1-3 times in an attempt to locate a second fawn. Twin checks were conducted for three does, but only one fawn was found and it was too old and too fast to catch. One doe has had fawns, but so far they have eluded capture. Biologist

Murphie also recorded the first fawn mortality of the season, which he attributed to bear predation. Fawn collaring may continue next week, as two does have apparently not fawned yet.



Look close. Can you find the fawn in this photo?



Here he is



Master Hunter volunteer Dan S. reaches for a hiding fawn



A newly collared fawn waiting to be released

Capitol Forest Cluster: On Friday, June 5, Biologist Michaelis and Officer James conducted a fawn search in an area near the west fork of the Porter Creek drainage. No fawns were detected. Later the same day they investigated a recent fawn mortality which was determined to be caused by a bear.

On Sunday, June 7, Biologist Michaelis responded to a “VIT out” message and was able to capture a female fawn. Later, Biologist Michaelis and Novack conducted a search near the lower west fork Porter Creek for fawns but were unsuccessful. In the Capitol Forest study area there have been six fawns captured and radio equipped, with one fawn not radioed but still considered to be at risk for a short interval. Two fawns have died from the six radioed.

Clallam County Cluster: 10700 Doe – Single Fawn Collaring – June 3, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan, Biologist Ament, and Biologist Cullinan responded to a late afternoon VIT alert for collared doe 10700 on June 3. They were able to locate and collar one male fawn. The team searched for a few hours, but was unable to locate a second fawn at the site.



On June 4, 2015, Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan, volunteer Tina Vogel, and Biologist Ament met early to conduct another search for a twin fawn for the 10700 doe. One male fawn was collared at the site the previous evening. The team was able to locate the collared fawn in a very densely brushed area. They searched the vicinity for a few hours, but were unable to locate a second fawn. The collared doe was nearby. Deer trails leading towards her location were also searched but no stashed fawn was found. This site is proving to be one of the most difficult areas to find fawns. See photos below.



Tina and Tim showing where the collared fawn was hiding

Wildlife Areas

Scatter Creek Wildlife Area: Managers Belson and Gerchak met with local NRCS staff to conduct an onsite inspection of an Oregon white oak restoration project at the Davis Creek Unit of the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. The project was funded through a 2002 WHIP contract for the planting of 900 oak seedlings on three acres of uplands adjacent to the Chehalis River floodplain. Expectations were low due to drought conditions that existed shortly after planting. However, a cursory look revealed a surprising number of trees hidden within the tall grass. WDFW committed to completing a full assessment of the project area, including weed control and other necessary maintenance around any surviving trees that were discovered.

On the following day, Managers Belson and Gerchak, Assistant Manager Gallegos, and Wildlife Area Assistants R. Vanblaricom and D. Vanblaricom surveyed the area and tallied a total of 200+ surviving trees on two acres. The care with which the trees were planted paid off greatly, particularly weed control provided by plastic shade cloth placed at each tree. Maintenance of the project area will be completed in the coming weeks and will be conducted annually in order to maximize chances for project success and to ensure that WDFW's obligations under the WHIP contract are met.

Oregon white oak after maintenance three years post-planting, protected by shade cloth and guard



Wildlife Conflict

Coyote Pups: Biologist Harris responded to a citizen request regarding five coyote pups that have taken residence in their back yard. They reported that they and their neighbors have called several times and that they have also called rehabbers. They felt that no one was taking them seriously. Biologist Harris explained that he was skeptical also and responded because he had to see this for himself. The pups have made themselves at home in their back yard and are even sleeping on their back porch. No reports of any adult coyotes. However, the citizens reported that in the morning the pups were in the back yard and after a few yips from the woods the pups took off into the woods. They reported that they heard lots of yipping after this, indicating that mom was back with something to eat. Yet, at all other times the pups are in the yard and even lounging on the street. This is causing a problem because people constantly stop to inform the residents that their dogs are out. Neighborhood concerns range from concern for pets to concerns for children. Biologist Harris is currently monitoring the issue and staying in contact with home owners. He is concerned that these pups are getting habituated and that people may start feeding them.



Coyote pup laying in the yard

Master Hunter Helping Landowners: After checking bear damage on timberlands, Biologist Harris stopped and visited two dairy farms with elk problems. At the first one the landowner pointed to a truck and said there is one of your Master Hunters with a smile. Take a retired Master Hunter who never got to work on a farm as a youth and a small family run dairy and he got his wish. The Master Hunter reported he is having a great time helping get the silage in. The landowner reported that it is a win-win for him. They get help with the elk problem and help when needed on the farm. Considering this landowner seldom allowed hunting and was reluctant to allow Master Hunters on his property two years ago and now allows general season access on part of his holdings and Master Hunters on the rest, Biologist Harris thinks we will just call it success!

Master Hunter helping the farmer

