

## Wildlife Program

Week of September 15-21, 2014

### **REGION 1**

#### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Pre-hunt Deer Surveys District 2:** Biologist Lowe continued with deer composition surveys this week in the Penewawa Canyon of GMU 142 and on the west side of GMU 136. Biologist Atamian ran the Elk-Chattaroy deer composition survey in GMU 124. There were 201 deer counted, including 102 does, 80 fawns, and 19 bucks.

*~20 deer in the east side of a hay field that had over 80 deer*

**District 3 Deer Survey:** District Wildlife Biologist Paul Wik conducted a deer survey in GMU 178. Assistant District Biologist Vekasy conducted deer composition surveys in GMUs 149, 154, 162, and 163. Surveys have not been summarized as yet, but the focus of September surveys is composition for fawn:doe ratios, and, subjectively, fawn numbers appear normal.



*Mule deer buck in GMU 178.*

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Mule Deer Mount:** Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer picked up a completed mule deer mount that has been added to the educational materials at Sherman Creek WLA. The mule deer buck was mistakenly killed last fall during the late modern firearm season, when only white-tailed bucks can be harvested. The



mount was already used this week to teach 4<sup>th</sup> grade students the importance of being able to tell the difference between a white-tailed deer and a mule deer.

### *Mule Deer Mount*

**Lake Roosevelt Water Festival:** Sherman Creek Wildlife Area staff participated in the Lake Roosevelt Water Festival, which is an educational program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students throughout NE Washington. Christensen and Palmer hosted a session at the Sherman Creek Hatchery titled “Who’s for Dinner?” where they provided information on predator-prey interactions and the difference between antlers and horns.



*These Chewelah students are looking at the leading edge of a great horned owl wing.*



*These Springdale students are feeling the velvet on a moose antler.*

**WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Large Wood Projects:** The Lacey Crew continued moving the spoils pile from the field across the river in the Russell Unit to the gravel pit for future use in projects. AWAM Dingman and NRW2 Christian seeded and spread straw on the disturbed area on the island between the main Tucannon channel and the new channel in Project Area (PA) 15. The Lacey Crew used their excavator to move the abandoned concrete sign base out of Campground 4 so the area no longer looks like a dump.

*Island in PA 15 that was seeded and mulched with straw*



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

**Private Lands/Access**

**National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee Meeting:** The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) hosted the first National Wild Pheasant meeting in Walla Walla. Private Lands Supervisor Joey McCanna was instrumental in planning, organizing, and hosting this important meeting. Upland Game Bird Specialists from fourteen different states attended the meeting, discussing current and needed research. The meeting had two days of presentations

ranging from an imprinted pheasant chick study to the Michigan pheasant initiative. Next year's meeting will be in Wisconsin.



*Habitat tour picture of meeting participants*

**Assistant Director Tour:** Conflict Specialist Rasley was asked to show Assistant Director Nate Pamplin some of the areas where we typically have a lot of deer and elk damage to commercial crops in the Blue Mountains. The tour was a good one with lots of topics being discussed.

**REGION 2**

**NO REPORT SUBMITTED**

## **REGION 3**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman completed the final report of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) PAC grant and submitted to RMEF headquarters. The grant was used to control diffuse knapweed in the Sanford Pasture/Mud Lake area of Oak Creek.

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom coordinated a meeting with Ducks Unlimited and other district personnel to discuss NAWCA updates, land acquisition opportunities, and potential project sites.

Manager Bjornstrom coordinated a demo with Dave Heimer's crew and their Marsh Master. The Marsh Master will be on site at Mesa Lake on Wednesday to begin work on clearing a site for wetland development.

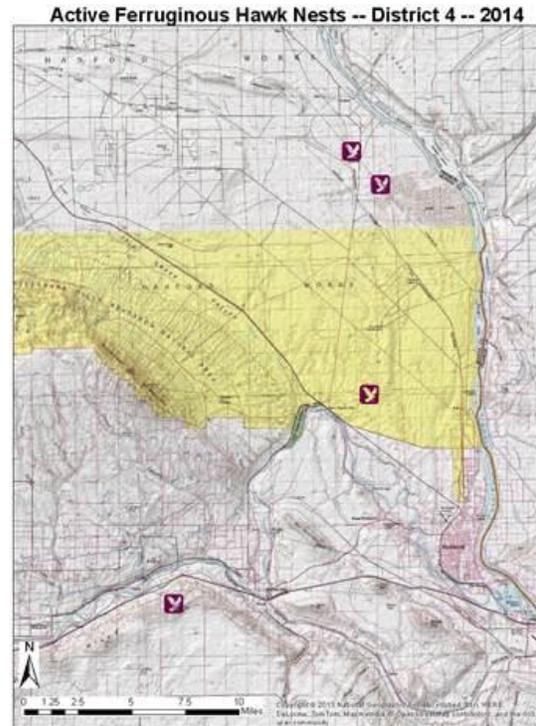
#### **Wildlife Management**

**Ferruginous Hawks:** Biologist Gregory received information about hawk nesting locations on the Hanford site. There were three active nests on Hanford this spring. However, biologists left the nests undisturbed for the season, so whether those nests fledged young is unknown. There were no hawks nesting in Franklin County. The Juniper Dunes area was previously a reliable site for hawk reproduction, but historical ferruginous nest sites are now occupied by ravens, Swainson's hawks, and red-tailed hawks. Therefore, there was only one confirmed successful ferruginous hawk nest in District 4 this year. A nest in the Horse Heaven Hills of Benton County fledged three young. A more thorough survey effort for ferruginous hawks is needed in District 4 to assess the species' status.

#### ***Active ferruginous hawk nests in District 4***

**Diversity:** Biologist Gregory began working on an interim State Wildlife Grant report for survey/management activities for burrowing owls and white pelicans.

Gregory also updated WDFW wildlife observations records with recent detections of jack rabbits and woodhouse toads.



Biologist Gregory offered advice to Benton County Mosquito Control regarding the best methods for effective weed control while preserving habitat function at a suburban wetland in West Richland.

**Pheasants:** The 2014 [Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement & Release Program](#) got underway in District 4 with the first release of the season ahead of the opening youth hunting season.



Biologist Gregory and Technician Kaelber released 210 birds at three sites in Franklin County.

***Technician Kaelber releases pheasants at the Big Flat Habitat Management Unit***

Biologist Gregory visited the Toothaker Habitat Management Unit to assess the area's recovery from a spring fire in 2013. This site will probably be appropriate for pheasant release in 2015.



***The Toothaker Unit just after a fire in 2013***



***The Toothaker Unit in September 2014***

**District 4 Private Lands Biologist Ryan Stutzman:**

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner to discuss the payment scenarios and seeding requirements of the SAFE

program. The landowner submitted an application later in the week and Stutzman will be writing his NRCS conservation plan in the coming days.

Stutzman worked with Benton County FSA and a Benton County landowner on an Upland Field buffer application. The application was submitted on Thursday and Stutzman began writing the plan on Friday.

**District 8 Assistant Wildlife Biologist William Moore:** Moore worked to complete the census of the collared ewes in the Umtanum/Selah Butte units. The effort during the previous week left seven ewes that had not been observed and Moore was able to locate five of those seven. One of the five tracked down was a mortality, as even though the collar was found, the carcass was not. The collar appears to have been chewed and was potentially carried off by coyotes. The cause of death of this ewe is unknown. Only one of the other four ewes observed had a lamb with it.

Biologist Moore collected samples from 5 harvested rams in the Umtanum/Selah Butte units. These samples were sent to the WSU lab for disease testing. One ram checked was extremely nice with bases over 15 inches and lengths in the lower 30's.

#### **District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist**

**Steve Wetzel:** A homeowner in Ellensburg called to report a sick deer in his yard. Conflict Specialist Wetzel went to the location and found a yearling deer that could not get up or open its eyes, but was vocalizing and thrashing on the ground. The homeowner reported that the deer had been there in that condition for about 16 hours. The deer was euthanized and samples were sent to WSU as requested by Dr. Kristin Mansfield.



Elk were present in various areas around Cle Elum and Ellensburg, using crop fields but generally responding well to pressure from open hunting seasons, Master Hunter seasons, and landowner permits. The harvest of crops continues but dry conditions have not eased elk or deer use in some agriculture areas.

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

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** On Saturday morning, Manager Huffman met up with volunteers from jeep clubs at the Pacific Northwest 4 Wheel Drive Associations Annual- Pick up a Mountain event at Jim Sprick Community Park in the Nile (picture). Hundreds of jeep users from all over the state get together for a fun weekend with a lot of volunteer activities. Huffman worked with seven local



***PNW4WDA Annual Pick up a Mountain event in the Nile***

volunteers to try and block vehicle access to a mudding hole on the NF Wenas Creek. The group used the jeeps and winches to drag logs from the area to block roads and fill in mud holes to stop the people from further tearing up the creek and the springs. In addition, the group filled Huffman's truck with trash from the site. The group put in a hard day of work and had a lot of fun. Pictures are below showing some before and after shots of the area.



*PNW4WDA Annual Pick up a Mountain event in the Nile*



*A large mud hole with a spring flowing down the ruts before being blocked to access*



*Mud hole blocked to access using a root wad and logs (looking opposite direction). Most of the water is now being diverted into the natural path instead of down the tire ruts.*



*Trail crossing the NF Wenas Creek with water flowing down the road*



*Logs blocking the road and a new sign showing the trail is closed*



*Jeep in action dragging a log into place to try and block the 3 other spots where people were driving in the creek to play and access the mud hole*



*Group picture of the volunteers after a long day of work on the Rock Creek Unit*



*Several logs were placed in the mud hole and at the end of the road to block access from the other direction*

Assistant Manager Berry spent a day installing boundary signs on the Rock Creek Unit focusing on roads in the eastern part of the unit. Over a dozen boundary signs were installed, mostly on existing posts used by the Forest Service. Work will continue until the unit sections are clearly marked for the public so that they know when they are on the wildlife area.

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris participated in a conference call with Olympia Wildlife Program staff (AD Pamplin and Section Managers Whipple and Posner) and Region 3 staff (RD Livingston and RPM McCorquodale) to discuss the next steps for Wenas target shooting issues and concepts for facility development at range sites on the north and south end of the wildlife area.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Assistant Manager Hunt checked the Whiskey Dick Corrals site to assess the safe and appropriate parking available for a film crew permitted to come in on Friday. They are filming a WA Lottery commercial near the Pumphouse Road access, and required more parking space than is available there. We were able to accommodate with some more space at Corrals. Additionally, Hunt fielded several calls from the production lead regarding fire rules, green dot markers, rattlesnakes, etc. and followed up with a field check on Friday. The group seemed to be getting along fine, aside from the wind and dust.

**Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a new deer damage complaint from a landowner in the Crow Butte area. At least 20 deer have taken up residence in their prized wine grape vineyard and have caused damage by browsing on the formed grape clusters or rubbing by buck deer. Several non-lethal strategies were discussed and will be implemented as well as hunting effort during established seasons.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with a landowner in the Kahlotus area to discuss winter wheat planting schedules and possible deer damage concerns. With the current low soil moisture conditions, planting may be delayed until late winter/early spring, thus reducing available crops to be damaged by deer during the winter.

**District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Steve Wetzel:** The Swauk sheep lease band moved to the Red Bridge area on September 12. Range rider McBride and Specialist Wetzel continued to use daily GPS and telemetry following of wolves in the area until the sheep move.

Range Rider Johnson patrolled areas of the Teanaway Cattle lease. Roundup is scheduled for October 15.

Officer Peterson, Specialist Wetzel, Range Rider McBride, and two other range riders searched for a domestic cow reported as possibly killed by wolves. The three range riders searched on horseback while Peterson and Wetzel searched on foot. No carcass was located. Two days later the three range riders located the carcass at what appeared to be the correct location; it was a bull elk that recently died of unknown causes.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Wildlife area staff spent the last two weeks working to complete expenditures associated with the emergency funding that BPA approved for habitat restoration and fence rebuild/repair related to the Cottonwood #2 fire. Staff have been working with contractors, ordering materials, and submitting paperwork for non-contract purchases over \$10,000, and are on-track to complete the expenditures they committed to by September 30. The fencing contractor is on-site installing sucker pipe on the 1.1 miles of completely burned fence, and they have been approved to install the new wire as well. Materials for the fence rebuild have all been ordered and herbicides have been received. Seed bids for 625 acres of seeding have been received and will be awarded in the coming week.

Assistant Manager Taylor hauled new 4” pipe and sucker pipe to Scout Lake Construction, who are installing posts on the Cottonwood Buffalo elk fence that burned. Taylor marked out gates and break-aways with the fence contractor and checked on their progress installing pipe posts.

***Scout Lake Construction installing sucker pipe along burned section of elk fence***



Assistant Manager Taylor received a report thru Oak Creek staff that there is some elk fence down in Kelley gulch. Staff also received a report of elk fence having been cut at Austin Spur Road, in the Conrad Ranches development. We need to determine what materials will be needed for the repair and our best option for getting into the site, which may be Cleman’s Ridge road because the homeowners have objected to department access via roads in the development. The other option is a three mile hike in from the Orchards to the west, a long haul with wire and fencing tools.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman met up with officers from Detachment 18 and toured most of the Rock Creek Unit. The focus was on closed roads and problem areas. It was a good opportunity for officers to drive a lot of the roads and see the extent of our ownership. The group checked out most of the problem areas where people are mudding or driving on closed roads.

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** On Tuesday, Assistant Manager Hunt, Craig Schnebly, and Kyle Hill removed most of the hotwire for the stock fence going across Skookumchuck Canyon, and further south into Whiskey Dick. Schnebly followed up Wednesday with the remainder and also began removal of the step-in posts, getting all the posts pulled on the Whiskey Dick stretch.

Permanent stock fence being constructed to replace the above temp electric fence is near completion by the contractor. However, Schnebly and Hunt found several things that will need to be corrected prior to final approval of the job. Casey Davidson (CAMP) has also found some problem areas in the fence construction that did not match specifications. Schnebly and Casey Davidson hiked the partially completed fence line on Thursday, along with an employee of the contractor, to locate and document any and all problems needing attention.

Tech Hill treated Canada thistle sites at the top of Watt Canyon Road. Earlier treatments this year and last have reduced the size of the infestations by 2/3. Hill will be on annual leave until Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Assistant Manager Hunt sent off a water sample from the Manastash Cabin gravity flow spring development that provides running water to the cabin. It will be tested for E.coli and other bacteria, as suggested by Kittitas County Field and Stream members who volunteered time at the cabin last week. Darrel Eason, our lead volunteer on the cabin project, dropped by and offered to replace a "No Unauthorized Vehicles" sign that had been torn down at the gate to the cabin, and Hunt took him up on it.

### **Wildlife Management**

**District 4 Private Lands Biologist Ryan Stutzman:** Biologist Stutzman and Access Technician Kaelber removed a huge amount of puncture vine (goatheads) from two Register to Hunt parking lots in Benton County. One parking area was nearly completely "carpeted" with the plant. This particular RTH property is primarily a bird hunting opportunity and so too much puncture vine would be hard on dogs. The plants were manually removed, rather than sprayed with herbicide, in an attempt to remove as many goat head burrs as possible.



*Left: Access Technician Kaelber “rolling” up the carpet of puncture vine that was removed from a Register to Hunt parking area in Benton County. Right: A clean parking area after removal.*

## **REGION 4**

### **GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE**

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Lowland Pika Project Report:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued assembling, analyzing, and presenting data for the completion report of the two-year lowland survey for Pikas in the lower Stillaguamish Valley. Field visits still need to be performed to quantify habitat and vegetation characteristics.

**Species of Greatest Need Fact Sheets:** Biologist Milner worked on the first of 11 species assigned to her. Assuming the Shaw Island vole would be the easiest to use as a trial run through the process because it only occurs in District 13 and we work on this vole, Milner spent four hours on the fact sheet and will need additional time to conclude the assignment for this species. Milner also consulted with Biologist Sato about the reporting format that will be most efficient for reporting on progress for SWGS tasks assigned for the last 12 months.

**Sharp-tailed Snake citizen Science Presentation:** Biologist Milner worked on a power point presentation that we hope to present to members of the public on San Juan Island in October, inviting them to place and check cover boards on their property, looking specifically for the sharp-tailed snake, but recording any observations they may find.



*Sharp-tailed snake*

**Swam Mortality and Morbidity Project:** Biologist DeBruyn worked to organize the swan collection effort for the upcoming winter season. A visit was made by DeBruyn and Biologist Smith to ascertain the status of deterrent measures and check the lake level to see if it will be possible to test lead abatement methods in the lake.

### Wildlife Areas

**Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard attended a meeting with Pacific Northwest National Laboratories (PNNL), Ducks Unlimited, and the Stillaguamish Natural Resources staff to discuss hydrodynamic modeling. PNNL is under contract to set up a 3-D hydrodynamic model for Leque Island and vicinity, and to run the model for each of the 6 design alternatives that WDFW submitted to them. At the meeting, PNNL presented preliminary results for each of the design alternatives. Over the next several weeks, PNNL will run several more iterations of the model and complete an analysis of the results. These results will then be compiled in a report, and when it is available, WDFW will distribute and discuss the results with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee before selecting the preferred design alternative.

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

### Wildlife Management

**Snow Goose Festival Planning Meeting:** Biologist Milner attended the first planning meeting of the season for the Stanwood Snow Goose Festival scheduled for the last weekend in February. Milner was asked to once again present a beginning shorebird identification class in conjunction with Ecostudies Institute and will be working with local WA State Park staff to brainstorm ideas for additional activities that the public will enjoy during the festival.

**Migratory Bird Enhancement Management:** Technician Otto gathered barley samples at all bird enhancement sites. Crop conditions were all at desired levels and should provide ample forage for migratory birds in 2014/2015.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Coordination and Management:** Technicians Otto and Deyo built and set up hunting blinds in Whatcom County. They also surveyed all enrolled sites in Whatcom, Snohomish and Skagit Counties for access/harvest conditions.

**Waterfowl Blind Building:** Technicians Otto and Deyo built and brushed up multiple blinds along with making minor carpentry repairs and improvements in the central Whatcom County area.

**Blind Building Preparation:** Technicians Otto and Deyo delivered blind material to field locations and staged supplies at LaConner. Deyo and Otto also filled 50 sandbags and placed them at strategic locations on various waterfowl sites to help keep water in the units longer.

## Wildlife Areas

**Pheasant Release Program:** Technicians Otto and Deyo set up the Arnold Farm pheasant release site on Whidbey Island. Parking lot, shooting zone, and area boundary signs were posted to inform hunters on site regulations. NRT Otto and Deyo posted signs and completed a safety check of the Arnold Farm pheasant release site. Manager Kessler received the first delivery of pheasants for the hunting season. 390 birds were brought up from the Game Farm in Centralia.



The Pheasant Hunting season started with a good turnout of youths on the Intalco and Lake Terrell Units. Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 300 pheasants for the youth season, and 90 more for the first day of the Senior Hunt. Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech Curran Cosgrove posted Closed Area signs on portions of the Bow Hill Pheasant Release Site to keep hunters away from ongoing timber harvest area. Biologist Caldwell finished surveying the Anderson Mountain area for potential pheasant release sites. None of the area was found to be compatible for pheasant hunting. Biologist Caldwell contacted pheasant release volunteer Burke to discuss volunteer options, release needs, and hunt status on Whidbey Island pheasant release sites.

*A happy young pheasant hunter on the Whatcom Wildlife Area*

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Sno-Valley Farms to discuss harvest plans for the east lobe of the Unit. Manager Boehm has also assembled an “Ebey Island Team” for the pheasant release program that will coordinate release efforts at Ebey Island. Manager Boehm coordinated pheasant release training with new volunteers, and stopped by the Unit for the Saturday pheasant opener to greet hunters.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss harvest plans for the Unit. Corn is planned to be harvested between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, Manager Boehm worked with volunteers to install a new service road gate and traffic barrier posts in an effort to control vehicles from damaging ditches and service roads.



*Happy young pheasant hunters on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area*

**Stillwater Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss harvest plans for the Unit. Corn is planned to be harvested between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Plans are set to keep hunters away from the harvesting equipment to ensure a safe, quick harvest.

**Youth Waterfowl Hunting Season:** Manager Kessler posted signs at Lake Terrell to prevent recreational boating during the Youth Waterfowl season. Due to the sunny weather, many people arrived hoping to fish from boats, kayaks, and paddle boards, but compliance was very good.

**Samish Unit Enhancement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent a notice to everyone who signed in at the project Open House in June to alert them of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) comment period that is currently open for this project. The materials are on the internet for review at: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa\\_comment\\_docs.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html). The comment period closes September 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to discuss issues with project billing and the next steps to stay on track to begin construction in Summer 2015. NRCS is funding construction of this project.

**Samish River Unit (Welts) Project Permitting:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed permit packages and submitted them to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE). The project requires a Section 404 permit from the Corps and 401 Water Quality Certification from DOE.

**Agricultural enhancement program: Island Unit:** Staff finished vegetation management projects in areas of 6 fields on the Unit. Fields were disked, chisel plowed, and cultipacked. See attached picture of Fireman's Field.

***Fireman's Field on the Island Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area***

**Fishing access:** Fishing access on the Samish River Unit continues to be very popular. There were forty one cars counted along the property on Monday morning tide. Chinook fishery is in full swing and this site is one of the few public access points for fishing along the lower river.



**Region 4 Ungulate Damage:** Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents of King and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. Technician Cogdal and representatives from several local Tribes continued installing permanent elk exclusion fencing on a property in Skagit Valley. Cogdal also spent time monitoring and hazing elk in various locations in Skagit County and spent time preparing a bid for temporary fencing to be used in the area. Smith

constructed a temporary elk exclusion fence to deter elk from entering a pumpkin field in King County.

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**Wildlife Management**

**Respond to public:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra communicated with a landowner on Whidbey Island who is seeking permits for a remodeling project and is running into resistance from the county due to an eagle nest the landowner claims blew out in 2006. A field visit was scheduled to investigate. Since delisting of the eagle, the USFWS has assumed responsibility for management, but WDFW maintains the database used by the USFWS and counties. With the last comprehensive survey of nesting eagles performed nearly a decade ago, the database is very out of date and results in issues of this type occurring.

**Private Lands/Access Program**

**GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 Nooksack Special Permit Hunt Coordination and Patrol:** Biologist Caldwell spoke with and established meetings with five special permit hunters to exchange access keys and information. Technician Deyo surveyed the 418 and 4941 units for use and sign needs.

***Technician Deyo observed this branched antler bull elk while patrolling GMU 418.***

**Volunteer Coordination for Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Use Surveys:** Biologist Caldwell contacted Volunteer Coordinator Dazey to establish a group of volunteers that would assist the Private Lands Access program on weekend surveys of Waterfowl Quality Hunt site use. Several volunteers were identified and contacted.



**Fisherman Trespass issues:** Staff monitored signage at a North Skagit waterfowl unit that has received heavy trespass incidents accessing the Samish river. None of the signs were tampered with this week and Otto talked with the landowner and he is very pleased with the efforts of the Enforcement and Wildlife programs. While in Whatcom county, staff were contacted by an enrolled landowner partner about fisherman/vehicle trespass issues on the Nooksack river WQH units. Otto and Deyo installed signage on their access and notified Officer Valentine with enforcement of the landowner concerns.

## Wildlife Areas

**Lake Terrell Managers Residence Energy Upgrade:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the local company that was awarded the contract to perform an energy upgrade on the Manager's residence at Lake Terrell. The company took all of the window and door measurements and ordered them. Manager Kessler cleared out space in the garage for storage of the upgrade materials. The work will begin this week with cleanup and replacement of the crawlspace insulation and sealing of the heating ductwork.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Manager Brian Boehm worked with over a dozen Master Hunter and citizen volunteers to complete sign board construction, sign installation, parking lot improvements, trail improvements, and pheasant pen maintenance this past week. All of the Unit parking lots now have new signboards and targeted signage to inform and advise users. Additional volunteers continued to make access trails along the Spencer Island dike trail to enable waterfowl hunters to hunt more of the area. Blackberry thickets block many of the paths, but this dedicated team of volunteers continues to whack away the brush for the benefit of fellow hunters.

## Hunter Education & Volunteer Projects

Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey assisted volunteer instructor Rich Klinnert to conduct a Field Skills Evaluation at the North Whidbey Sportsman Association. This venue had not been used since 2012. This class went so successfully that volunteer instructor Klinnert will continue to hold classes at this venue. This was the second class this month for instructor Klinnert. Following this class, volunteer instructor Klinnert immediately scheduled another class. His comment at the time was that due to the size of the wait list he wanted to insure that all students who needed the Field Skills Evaluation had an opportunity to take it.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey evaluated the teaching team at Camp Pigott. The team at the camp also assisted coordinator Dazey in conducting a Pre-Service Training for Instructor applicants. The team taught and mentored the applicants in the AM during the first Field Skills Evaluations then shadowed the instructor applicants as the applicants conducted the afternoon Field Skills Evaluation. 107 students were certified during the two sessions held. The assistance of the teaching team and the new instructor applicants made this a very productive day.



*While the certified instructors taught the AM evaluation, the instructor applicants studied and readied their presentations for the PM evaluation*



*After receiving a range safety orientation, students were given an opportunity to live fire under the supervision of the instructors and instructor applicants*



*While instructor applicant Viglietta covers ammo selection and identification with a student, instructor applicant Viehoever covers first aid in the classroom*



*Instructor applicant Hebner and Tatro review skills on crossing fences and getting into and out of a boat safely*



*Students travel a field course trail that includes zones of fire and several stations where they encounter safe, ethical, and legal hunting questions and decoys, with finally a simulated game check with Enforcement officer McQuoid*

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

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Skagit Headquarters:** Manager Rotton, Region 4 Lands Agent Kye Iris, and the new Real Estate Section Manager Julie Sandberg toured several Skagit WA properties to introduce her to the properties and issues in Region 4.

**Safety Training Planning:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued discussions with Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson concerning structure and format of emergency egress training for staff surveying over water, as well as planning for upcoming surveys.

**Mandatory Supervisor Training:** Staff attended the first module of WDFW HR Office's supervisor training, for which attendance is required of any person who supervises staff, regardless of their experience supervising.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide net pen repairs, plumbing repairs, and the construction of six signboards for the Snoqualmie Units. Manager Boehm reports that the temporary net pen near Lake Stevens is ready to receive Ebey Island birds. Manager Boehm has assembled and trained a pheasant release team and is finalizing plans for receiving and releasing pheasants to the four Snoqualmie Units. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator has been a huge success, by directing people who want to volunteer to Manager Boehm, who has many tasks and projects lined up.

**Hunter Education:** Steve Dazey conducted the final session of the Pre-Service Training (PST) required of all volunteer hunter education instructor applicants to certify as instructors. The final session for this group of applicants will be an opportunity to teach an actual class of students at the Boy Scout Camp Pigott on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Seven new instructors completed their PST training and are ready to be certified following final background checks. Two of the seven are enforcement officers from the Stillaguamish tribe and plan to start conducting classes at the Stillaguamish Natural Resources building. These classes will be open to the public and should greatly assist in meeting the demand for classes in Skagit and northern Snohomish County.

## **REGION 5**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Black-tailed Deer Composition Surveys:** Biologists Holman and Bergh conducted spotlight surveys for deer in Washougal GMU 568 with the help of volunteers Tom Glassett and Randy Lawffer of the Yacolt Burn Sportsman’s Club. The weather was very warm and dry, and only 30 deer were seen. The biologists went out later in the week after a day of light rain and saw 31 additional deer. The data collected from these surveys is added to data incidentally collected by other biologists and volunteers to include in the annual regional deer report and for use in population estimation modeling. In addition to the deer, 12 elk were located (including 4 3-point or larger bulls), and 3 coyotes and 4 porcupines were also seen.

Thanks to Yacolt Burn Sportsman’s Club members Glassett and Lawffer mentioned above, as well as all of their Club members. YBSC has facilitated free public access to Weyerhaeuser forestlands for 15+ years in the popular “Yacolt Burn” area of GMU 568. The Club has maintained this access by diligent opening and closing of gates daily during hunting season, conducting litter cleanups, signing entrance points, checking on gates and equipment, successfully competing for grant monies (ALEA), etc. Additionally, the Club is active in conducting hunter education courses, participated in the development of the elk hoof disease prevalence surveys, and does charity work in the North Clark County area.

#### **Wildlife Areas**

##### **Management Plan Scoping Public Meeting:**

A public meeting to provide information about the Klickitat Wildlife Area and solicit comments regarding a new management plan was held in Goldendale on Sept. 16. Melinda Posner, of WDFW's Lands Division facilitated the meeting. Regional WDFW staff shared local knowledge and answered questions from attendees. Manager Van Leuven, Technician Davis, District Wildlife Biologist Anderson,



***Klickitat Wildlife Area – Sondino Unit Planning Area***

and District Fish Biologist Weinheimer were present for this event. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is updating the management plan for the Klickitat Wildlife Area, which consists of seven units. The new management plan will address the status of wildlife species in the area and their habitat, the progress of restoration efforts, and public recreation opportunities. The management activities included in the plan will address these seven landscapes.

**Pheasant Release:** Rooster pheasants were released at all three Klickitat County pheasant sites in preparation for the Youth Pheasant Hunt Sept. 20 – 21. The pheasants were good quality.



### ***Klickitat Youth Hunt Release***

**Deer Surveys:** Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis spent two evenings this week conducting road surveys for deer in GMUs 388 and 382. 113 deer were classified the first evening and 51 deer were classified the second evening. The surveyors also observed flocks of green-winged teal, mallards, and quail, as well as a snipe, a black bear, a coyote, and a peacock.

### **Swofford Unit Culvert Replacement:**

Wildlife Area staff replaced a culvert on the Swofford Unit of the wildlife area. The culvert allows access across a drainage that is dry most of the year. The drainage funnels runoff from the adjacent properties uphill of the wildlife area. The old pipe was rusting out and undersized so a larger plastic pipe was installed. No water was present at the time of construction.

**Mossyrock Pond Riser Replacement:** Wildlife Area staff replaced the flashboard riser on Pond #2, located on the Mossyrock Unit of the wildlife area. The old riser's culvert was rotting out and water had breached the pipe creating undermining that was further exacerbated by burrowing activity. Staff cleaned out grass and other vegetation from the ditch that supplies water to three of the ponds on the Mossyrock Unit. During the rainy season, the water emerges from the ground in the upper field above and drains down the hill via the ditch to Pond #1. The vegetation was choking off the ditches, preventing them from functioning properly.



### ***Pond Riser Replacement in the Cowlitz Wildlife Area***

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

**Wildlife Conflict:** Conflict Specialist McDonald addressed several deer complaints from Clark County residents and a skunk complaint in Klickitat County. Recommendations were made to help alleviate some of the deer damage to ornamentals and gardens. One resident has experienced a large increase in wildlife presence since logging began on a neighboring property. Up to 33 deer have been observed on his property at one time as well as increased visits by coyotes, bears, and a cougar.

**Access Program – Langsdorf**

**Landing:** Last week had a total of 50 vehicles during a site visit at Langsdorf Landing with 28 vehicles having an access pass, 14 having a discovery pass, and 8 with no passes at all. A lot of the activity is associated with salmon fishing on the Columbia River.

***Langsdorf Landing Access Area***



**REGION 6**

**NO REPORT SUBMITTED**