

Wildlife Program

Week of September 12 – September 18, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

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

Livestock Claims Process: Supervisor McCanna traveled to Olympia and participated on a work group to improve the livestock claims process for producers. This work group will meet again in the near future.

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting (WAG): Supervisor McCanna attended the two day WAG meeting held in Issaquah. Updates were provided on the Profanity Peak lethal removal.

Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna participated on a conference call for next steps on the lethal removal of the Profanity Peak wolf pack.

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

Profanity Peak Contacts: Supervisor McCanna spent endless hours contacting key cooperators, state representatives, and the local sheriff in Ferry County.

OR-38: Biologist Earl and Conflict Specialist Rasley checked on the location of OR-38 since he had made large movements across grazing allotments last week. Earl contacted the producer with the grazing allotment where the wolf is currently staying.

Sightings and/or Howling Reported: Hunters reported seeing three wolves in Coombs Canyon. A range rider reports seeing a single wolf near a grazing allotment on private property near Huber Ridge. A producer near Grouse Flats reported hearing multiple animals howling near his house.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA-L): Biologist Earl met with several range riders and/or producers. A producer reported his cattle acting very different. They were charging and fighting his herding dogs, which they have never done before.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Periodic Status Reviews: Biologist Gerry Hayes continued to review and respond to public comments on the peregrine falcon periodic status report now out for the 90 day public comment

period. He continues to review background material on the peregrine falcon in preparation for a change in listing recommendation to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Biologist Chris Sato began to evaluate and incorporate peer review comments on the green/loggerhead sea turtle and leatherback sea turtle periodic status reviews. Ten experts reviewed both documents.

Guiding Documents: Biologist Lisa Hallock initiated the peer review process for the Periodic Status Review for the western pond turtle in Washington. The document was written by Lisa Hallock, Anita McMillan, and Gary Wiles. WDFW is directed to conduct reviews of each endangered, threatened, or sensitive wildlife species at least every five years after the date of its listing. The reviews are designed to evaluate current information to determine whether the listing status is warranted or deserves reclassification. Twenty-three reviewers with western pond turtle expertise were contacted. Their affiliations included WDFW and other state and federal government agencies in Washington, Oregon, and California, as well as zoos and universities. To date, fourteen experts have agreed to review the document by the September 1 deadline. We appreciate their assistance in improving the content and accuracy of the document.

Mann's Mollusk-eating Ground Beetle Surveys: Biologist Chris Sato initiated planning for baseline surveys on this very rare species. She met with Wildlife Diversity Division Manager Penny Becker to discuss logistics for bringing in Coleoptera expert Jim LaBonte from the Oregon Department of Agriculture to train WDFW employees on detection, identification, and survey methods. The surveys are scheduled for May or June 2017 and will be conducted at selected sites in the species' only known range in Washington, southeastern Asotin County. Columbia River tiger beetles will also be included in these surveys. Details will be forthcoming as plans fall into place.

Freshwater Mussels: Biologist Chris Sato attended a conference call with Xerces, USFWS, and others to discuss ongoing development of a draft protocol for native freshwater mussels of the Pacific Northwest to be used in shallow water bodies. The protocol will be adaptable for different purposes, including citizen science projects, incidental observations by natural resource/wildlife professionals, and monitoring by biologists or organizations.

Northern Leopard Frog Recovery: Biologist Lisa Hallock and Listing and Recovery Section Manager Hannah Anderson attended a northern leopard frog meeting at the WDFW Region 2 office in Ephrata. This meeting was organized by District Biologist Rich Finger to provide an update to stakeholders regarding WDFW's recovery efforts for the leopard frog. The meeting highlighted information collected over the last two years regarding the feasibility of reintroducing a northern leopard frog population in the Columbia Basin. Museum records indicate the northern leopard frog once inhabited at least 18 general areas in eight counties of eastern Washington, many of these along the Columbia River and its major tributaries. Field surveys conducted in the early 1990s confirmed the species in only two areas in the state, both of which were in the Crab Creek drainage of Grant County. Today, the species is confirmed at only the Potholes Reservoir. Reintroducing the frogs, a state endangered species, to more areas in Washington is important for reducing their vulnerability.

Landscape Conservation: Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson worked to secure a letter of support for a Working Lands for Wildlife designation in the South Puget Sound Prairies through

the Natural Resources Conservation Service from both WDFW and the USFWS. Wilkerson also worked to collate WDFW edits to the proposal itself, with edits provided by Section Manager Hannah Anderson and Restoration Ecologist David Hays. Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service State Biologist on the scope and details of a proposal for the South Puget Sound Prairies.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Preservation: Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel spent two days in Olympia reviewing and scoring Farmland Preservation grants. The advisory committee reviewed 24 project proposals. The majority of proposals were from northern Puget Sound, with a few from the Olympic Peninsula and central Washington as well. Several of the proposals could provide significant fish and wildlife habitat benefits if funded.

Shorebird Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan attended a stakeholder meeting held at Long Beach, Washington to inform stakeholders and solicit their support for the nomination of Willapa Bay as a site of international importance under the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Designation of the site does not include regulatory measures, and is instead focused on identification of important sites and developing awareness and partnerships that then represent the framework for conservation. Nomination materials will be submitted to a panel convened by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network in the months ahead. Buchanan provided a presentation on shorebirds and participated in discussions at the meeting.

Spotted Owl Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan attended a meeting of a group convened to develop a programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement to address spotted owl habitat. It would be managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The structure of the strategy is still under development. Topics of discussion have focused on details of the baseline and definition of the net conservation benefit.

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

Wild Watch Cameras: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally worked with teams across programs – Fish, Wildlife, Information Technology, and Public Affairs – to schedule site meetings and an evaluation discussion in October to help WDFW assess the ability to convert two wildlife camera projects to a live-streaming public viewing experience online.

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

Yakima Herald Republic Interview: Environmental Planner Mark Teske was interviewed by Mark Morey of the Yakima Herald Republic concerning the Range 12 fire. That fire burned from the Yakima Training Center east to the Hanford Reservation and consumed more than 176,000 acres of shrub-steppe. Craig Bartlett, with Public Affairs, arranged for the interview. It was an excellent opportunity for outreach regarding shrub-steppe conservation and fire.

Citizen Science Data: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally, Wildlife Survey Data Management Lead Treg Christopher, Wildlife Diversity Division Manager Penny Becker, and Science Division Manager John Pierce met to discuss the relationships among WSDM data (protocol and verified incidental observations), incidental observations that have not yet been verified or vetted, and citizen science project development. Citizen science projects with clear targets and protocols have a greater likelihood transitioning data into the corporate database, but – with jointly defined processes and user-friendly tools – there may be opportunities for more crowd-sourced citizen science incidental observations to be verified and accepted.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Support for Directors’ Meeting: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally met a request from Bill Tweit, Executive Directors’ Office, for a one-page handout. The Watchable Wildlife Project focused on eBird Northwest 2016. The handout will be shared with Washington, Oregon, and Idaho state fish and wildlife agency directors.

Mobile GIS Field Data Collection System: Mike Kuttel, Jr. coordinated with Region 2 private lands biologists regarding purchasing smartphones or tablets for use in mobile GIS data collection. Kuttel tentatively scheduled a training in late September to show them how they could use the test system he developed to track work on projects enrolled in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Pre-Season Deer Ground Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe conducted ground surveys in GMU 130, 136, and 142. The focus for the September surveys is fawn to doe ratio.



Doe and fawn group in wheat stubble



Two mule deer fawns beside the road, mom is on the other side of the road

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

Access Agreements: Biologist Earl met with landowners this week to discuss enrollment of their properties into an access agreement. Earl received two verbal commitments for new agreements, which would include about 4,000 acres. Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade worked on getting legal descriptions and maps together for the writing of the contracts. Wade also met with a landowner in Garfield County who would like to enter his property into an access agreement. This property would add another 1,000 acres of hunting access. Wade will meet with this landowner next week for further discussion.

Voluntary Public Access (VPA): Biologist Earl worked with the Contracts Office to write six amendments to VPA agreements. The amendments were sent to cooperators for approval. Earl also received a verbal commitment for three more VPA agreements in Garfield County. He will be writing those contracts next week.

Youth Pheasant Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked with Hunter Education & Volunteer Coordinator Garcia from Region 3 on getting upland bird hunting pamphlets for the youth who attend the Pheasants Forever Youth Pheasant Hunt this weekend.

W.T. Wooten WA – Pheasants: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman released pheasants on the Hartsock Unit in preparation for the youth pheasant season this weekend.

Pheasants loaded and ready to be released on the Hartsock Unit of the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area in preparation for the youth pheasant hunt



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

Conservation Planning: Private Lands Biologist Lewis completed work on the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) conservation plans and practice job sheets. Lewis is working on five project plans that will amount to approximately 1,500 acres of habitat in southern Whitman County.

College Students' Visit: Biology Professor Sherry Wood of Gonzaga University brought out a class of 13 undergraduates to Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area headquarters on Wednesday afternoon. Anderson spoke with them about the responsibilities and rewards of managing a wildlife area. Anderson also took them to a restored shrub-steppe grassland field at the wildlife area and discussed the process of habitat restoration. Most of the students were seniors who presumably will be out looking for work (if not pursuing an advanced degree) by next summer. The class spent nearly two hours out in the field with Anderson.

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

Interviews: Supervisor McCanna and Private Lands Biologists Baarstad and Thorne Hadley interviewed seven candidates by phone for the District 1 Natural Resource Technician position. The top four candidates were contacted for in-person interviews later this month.

REGION 2

No highlights submitted this week.

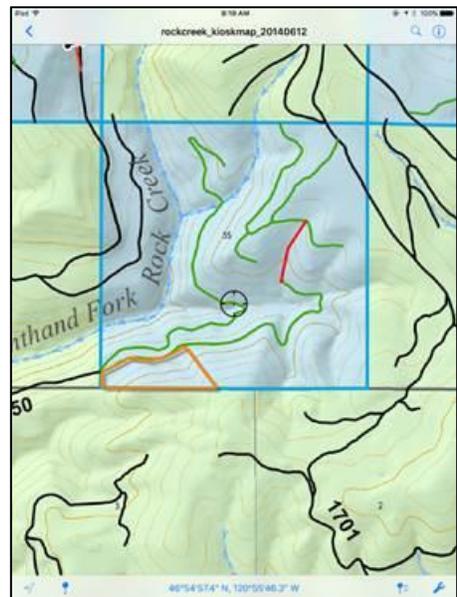
REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman spent most of the week on the Rock Creek Fire. Huffman issued a closure of the Rock Creek Unit in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) around the fire area to protect fire fighters and the public. Huffman worked with Public Affairs to get the information on the Oak Creek Webpage. Huffman toured the fire Monday with USFS and DNR agency representatives and attended a public meeting on Wednesday to answer questions about the closure and impact to hunting access. A plan was made by the crew to conduct a back burn to nearby roads rather than install a hand line on WDFW lands. Burning operations were completed over about three days and were successful in containing the fire. Huffman and Forester Mackey inspected parts of the area burned for damage and any immediate needs. Several areas were unsafe to enter. Overall, the fire burned in a mosaic pattern with minimal tree mortality. Initial recon identified at least 25 acres of extreme fire intensity and tree mortality out of approximately 600 acres of WDFW-managed land. Further evaluation will be needed to make the decision to conduct reforestation within the burn area. Mop up on the fire continued over the weekend and the fire will be turned back over to a local fire crew on Monday. Huffman coordinated with USFS on shrinking the closure area to an appropriate size. There will still be some impact on access for the next couple weeks as mop up and rehab work continues. The total fire size was 1,344 acres.

The area in orange depicts location of high intensity fire and high mortality due to the Rock Creek Fire

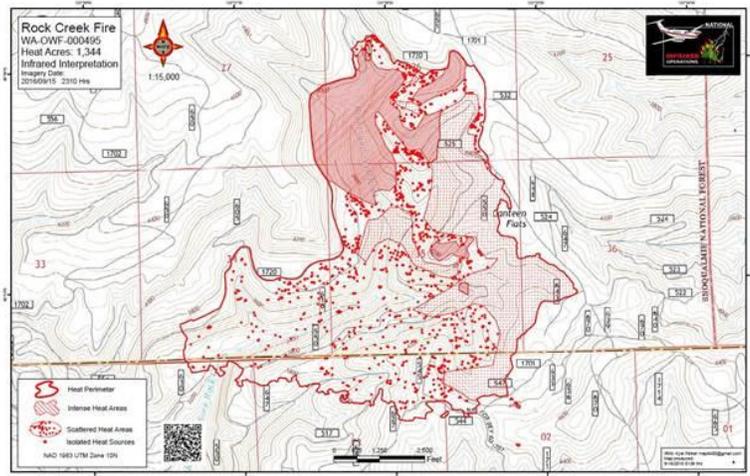




Close up and cross canyon pictures of high intensity fire on the Rock Creek Fire



Forester Mackey assessing damage to a plantation on the Rock Creek Fire. This area was burned out by the fire crews with mixed severity between the road and the fire.



Map of fire perimeter and infrared heat. Sections 35 and 27 are WDFW land in the Rock Creek Unit, while all surrounding land impacted is USFS.

Wildlife Management

Pheasant Release: District Biologist Fidorra released 190 pheasants onto three properties for the youth only pheasant season. The birds were received from the vendor in good condition.



Pheasants released at USACE habitat management units for the youth hunt

Tagging: District Biologist Fidorra met with successful hunters to tag a harvested bobcat and cougar. The cougar hunter was disappointed with our cougar hotline, which he found inoperative. Fidorra later learned that the wrong number was printed in the hunting regs. The correct number for hunters to call after harvesting a cougar is 1-866-364-4868. WDFW is mailing letters to registered hunters with this update.

American White Pelican: District Biologist Fidorra prepared historical colony data on American white pelicans for submittal to the Diversity WSDM database as a deliverable required by our State Wildlife Grant. Only two past entries in the database existed for the Badger Island and Crescent Island colonies – the only nesting colony in the state, active since 1994. Fidorra is working with Bird Research Northwest to fill in a few final blanks on past annual survey data since 2001.

Banding: District Biologist Fidorra prepared a database for banding data from western screech owls captured during wood duck nest box checks with the Richland Rod and Gun Club. Fidorra reviewed and entered 2016 and all historic data into the database. In 2016, 50 adult western screech owls were banded, plus three hatch-year birds. A very successful season!

SAFE: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman made some adjustments to two SAFE plans and met with the landowner in the field to discuss them and obtain signatures. The plans were finished months ago, but at the last possible moment, the landowner decided to make some changes and they had to be signed again.

CP33 Application: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Yakima to go over a last minute CP33 application that came in. Stutzman and NRCS discussed the standards and the current field condition, and it was determined that the expiring CRP would need to be reseeded. After discussing the options with Stutzman, the landowner decided to withdraw his application.

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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak, Natural Resource Worker Becker, and Natural Resource Technician Medina released pheasants for the youth hunt weekend.



A youth hunter with a mentor shoots at a pheasant during the pheasant clinic at the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit



Another youth hunter with a mentor shoots at a pheasant during the pheasant clinic at the Sunnyside Headquarters unit

Maintenance: Assistant Manager Kaelber mowed the trails to Windmill Lake and the Phase 3 wetland, around the north access parking lot, along the access road from the irrigation canal, and the circle 9 perimeter at the Windmill Ranch Unit.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a call about an irrigated corn operation with elk damage near Sunnyside. Trampling, bedding, and trailing occurred on a good portion of the farm. Nonlethal strategies such as LP gas cannons and hazing with pyrotechnics will be implemented. A Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement was developed and two Damage Prevention Permits were issued. There may also be possible hunting opportunities for master hunters.

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a deer damage complaint from a wine grape operation in the Crow Butte area along the Columbia River in southern Benton County. General season archery hunters were directed to the vineyard to assist with either harvesting or hazing deer from the area. The regional pool of Master Hunters who drew special permits was enlisted to provide hunting pressure in addition to the archery hunters.

Rattlesnake Hills: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared additional Damage Prevention Permits for a landowner in the Rattlesnake Hills area where elk damage has occurred in the apple orchard. Along with active hunting during daylight hours, hazing and LP gas cannons are in use at night.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry completed repairs on the breach in a large catch basin on the Cowiche Unit. Berry repaired wash outs in several locations on management roads.



Before and after picture of repairs to management road on the Cowiche Unit



Final repairs to the catch basin on the Cowiche Unit. Cockleburs are prevalent in the area and a plan will be developed to control the population.

Stock Water Tanks: Assistant Manager Berry surveyed Tommy Springs for upgrading stock water tanks. Staff members will remove the smaller tank and all derelict tanks and install a new, larger tank in the near

future. Berry found the overflow piping was no longer diverting water under the fence onto the adjacent ungrazed area.

An undersized stock tank on the Worrell Ranch on the Cowiche Unit. The overflow piping that diverted the water under the stock fence is disconnected, creating a wet area. No grazing occurred in the pasture this year.



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Bullwinkle Deer: Biologist Yarborough responded to a report of an abnormal deer in Bellingham. The deer had a unique appearance, but was moving around, feeding, and seemed in good health. The deer most likely has a chronic inflammation of the tissues of the nose, mouth, and upper lip. This is referred to as “bullwinkle” deer and is a fairly rare occurrence.



Bullwinkle deer near Bellingham



Whidbey Island pollinator garden

Wolverine Study: Biologist DeBruyn and a National Park Service Biologist scouted locations near Mt. Shuksan for a camera set up to be deployed this winter. They found a suitable location on a ridge at an elevation of 4,700 feet five miles up a very steep trail.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Watershed Council Annual Luncheon: Staff members in the Skagit area attended the Skagit Watershed Council Annual Luncheon for presentations on salmon recovery accomplishments and goals for the future.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Skagit area staff members met to discuss the North Fork Skagit Floodplain Restoration Project identified in the PSNERP plan. Topics discussed at the meeting included next steps in the PSNERP process, acquisition of property from willing landowners, and WDFW's role in managing restoration lands.

Lands 20/20: Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed a Lands 20/20 application proposing that WDFW may acquire a property on the North Fork of the Skagit River for future floodplain restoration purposes. Applications are due at the end of this month and will go through an internal and public review process.

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

Private Lands/Access Management

Washington State Conservation Commission: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended a two day Washington State Conservation Commission meeting at Friday Harbor. The meeting addressed many conservation issues and shed light on progressive management actions moving forward in 2016 and beyond.

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

Wildlife Management

HPAI Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn and Yarborough took down and stored duck traps from live duck capture for High Path Avian Influenza sampling. DeBruyn also sampled hunter harvested ducks from the weekend youth hunt in Skagit County.

Youth hunter proudly displays his limit on a rainy day

Wildlife Areas

Early Goose and Youth Waterfowl Hunting Seasons: Manager Kessler monitored the early goose and youth waterfowl hunting season at the Lake Terrell and Tennant Lake units. He posted signs to inform the public that non-hunting recreational boating is prohibited during these early hunting seasons.



Lake Terrell Pheasants: Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell headquarters. Kessler made sure all the waterers were working and the feeders remained full. He received an additional 300 pheasants for the first releases of the hunting season.

Youth and Senior Pheasant Hunting Seasons: Turnout for the youth pheasant hunting season at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units was very good in spite of the heavy rain Saturday morning. Many kids reported successful hunts. Releases for the youth season were done on Friday and Saturday evenings, and the first release for the senior season was done on Sunday evening.

BP Unit Pheasant Hunting Season Preparations: Manager Kessler met onsite with the environmental manager to discuss survey work which will be occurring the next couple weeks on the BP hunting area. Kessler will work with the surveyors to make sure there are no conflicts between their work and pheasant hunters using the area. Manager Kessler will also perform hunting path mowing in reed canary grass fields this week in preparation for the regular pheasant season.

Zoe Warner successful on her first youth pheasant hunt on the Intalco Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area



Private Lands/Access Management

Leque Island Vicinity Boat Launch: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Lands Agent Iris had a call with the Program Manager for the Recreation and Conservation Office Boating Facilities Program to discuss funding for a motorized boat launch near Leque Island.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts for waterfowl quality hunt units in the region. Nearly all the contracts for the 2016 Waterfowl season are complete. Biologist Wingard also prepared the Region 4 Private Lands Access site webpages for public view. These sites will go online as they become available to hunt. Natural Resource Technician Otto met with multiple landowners and completed their access agreements for the upcoming season.

Acme Big Game Unit: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto toured a recently enrolled property near Acme to assess signage needs and safety concerns. This site will offer Feel Free to Hunt opportunity for big game in GMU 407.

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff members and volunteers to kick off the 2016 pheasant season. Two net pens were prepared for the delivery of over 500 pheasants from the WDFW game farm this past week. Staff members and volunteers planted pheasant for the weekend youth hunt.

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

Wildlife Management

Manager Link presented at the Bird in the Hand event on Whidbey Island

Ungulate Conflict Management:

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, District 14 Wildlife Biologist Yarborough, and several Point Elliot Treaty Tribes Biologist staff members met with public citizens in Marblemount to discuss elk-related conflict management and other population management matters. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell spoke with a landowner from the Snoqualmie area about elk-related damage at his property.

Supervisor Caldwell is set to meet with the landowner next week to review his qualifying status and assess the damage situation further. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to and repaired a newly erected elk exclusionary fence that was recently damaged when elk entered/exited a private property. Cogdal also assisted Elk Area 4941 and GMU 418 hunters with Private Land Access needs. Cogdal followed up on monitoring efforts at identified elk damage locations and negotiated a proposed fence schematic for future management consideration.



Elk Meeting: Biologist Yarborough and Conflict Specialist Witman attended a community meeting in Marblemount to discuss elk. The meeting was set up by the community to learn about WDFW management and options available related to elk damage.

Successful Elk Area 4941 youth hunter

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in Core Team conference calls to discuss and plan next steps for the planning process. Manager Boehm also coordinated the Wildlife Area Advisory Council (WAAC) recruitment process for additional WAAC membership. Manager Boehm also attended a Core Team-facilitated dog training sub-group meeting held in Carnation.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Les Schwab of Everett for the removal of 72 tires illegally dumped at an Ebey Island parking lot. Les Schwab agreed to take the 72 tires and waive the \$3.00 per tire disposal fee, saving the Department over \$200.00 in disposal fees.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Drainage District 7 representatives to continue repairs to the dike that breached last November, resulting in a 150-foot hole in the structure. In exchange for access privileges for construction activities, the contractor hired by Drainage District 7 graded the interior unit access road and added gravel to the main parking area. Repairs should be completed before the pheasant general season opens.



Repair to the dike that breached last November, resulting in a 150-foot hole in the structure in the Cherry Valley Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Hunting Season Opener: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm posted informational, educational, and safety-related signage at the four pheasant release units in advance of the pheasant and waterfowl season opener. Additionally, the designated dog training area at Cherry Valley was returned to the hunting season boundary to reduce trainer/hunter conflicts, which have occurred in the past. The dog training area is in the same location as the past three seasons. Manager Boehm was on site at the Ebey Island Unit to meet and greet young pheasant hunters on opening day. Despite the rainy conditions, a number of proud youth hunters got their birds.



Happy youth hunters on the Ebey Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Private Lands/Access Management

418 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologists Wingard fielded several calls from 418 special elk permit holders. Biologist Wingard offered ideas about where to focus their effort.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Spraying: Natural Resource Technician Otto applied herbicide at multiple waterfowl quality hunt program sites to combat reed canary grass.

Hunter Education

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey assisted a hunter education instructor to conduct an online field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Dazey previewed a new teaching venue at a local American Legion hall and is working to get members of that post certified to teach. The venue would work well, as it has a large classroom and they own a wooded section for the field course. Coordinator Dazey conducted the first of two sessions to certify new instructors at the Black Diamond Gun Club.

Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey answered many questions during the week in regards to class availability, the deferral process, and other hunting-related topics. Dazey answered questions from a court ordered student and assisted him to find a class.

Master Hunter and Volunteer Outreach: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator assisted on a range day set up by Master Hunter Jim Slyfield so master hunter applicants had a place to come and get their shooting qualifications done. As the certification completion deadline approaches, Dazey is fielding more and more questions from applicants in regards to allowable service projects.

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

Pheasant Release: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager recruited, trained, and coordinated two pheasant release teams in preparation for the coming season. As before, Manager Boehm will be running two teams and net pens to support the Duvall area and Ebey Island Units.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

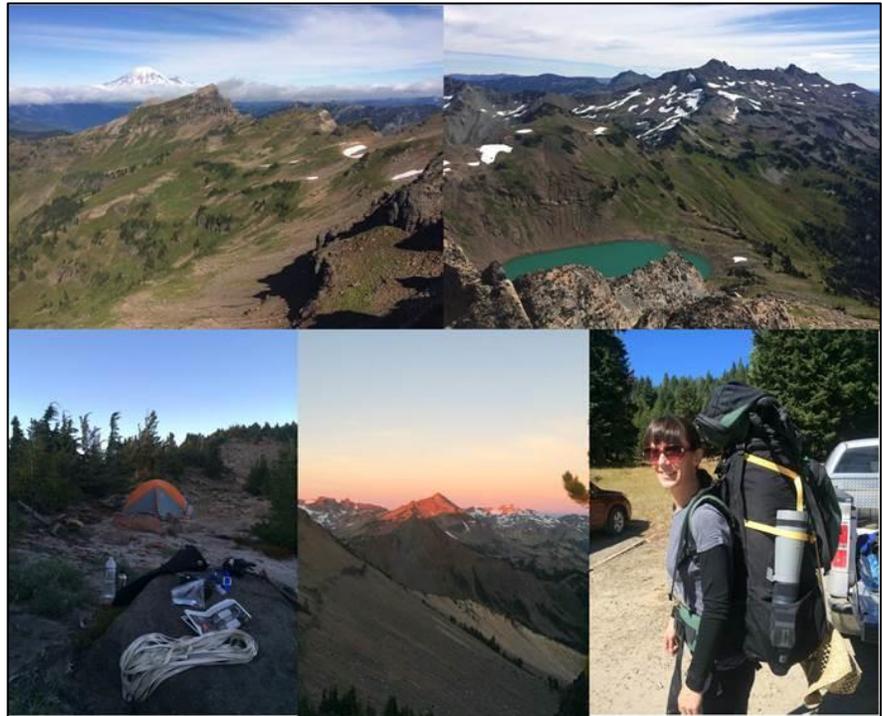
Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Surveys: Biologists Stephens, Bergh, and Holman conducted ground-based surveys of mountain goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. The effort was part of WDFW's ongoing effort to monitor for signs of MOVI pneumonia in the goats. This survey is combined with surveillance through the collection of biological samples from hunter-killed mountain goats and surveys conducted by volunteers during July of 2016. The most recent survey recorded 70 goats, none of which showed signs of disease.

Mountain goat surveys

Western Pond Turtle:

Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit following the mowing of tall grass, Scot's broom, and blackberry to maintain and enhance nesting habitat for the western pond turtle in the Columbia River Gorge. Approximately 10 acres of upland habitat were mowed this week as part of a cooperative habitat management agreement between WDFW and USFS at their Skamania County western pond turtle habitat. USFS has been an active partner with WDFW since their acquisitions of this critical area over 15 years ago.



USFS upland habitat management for western pond turtle

Townsend's Big-eared Bat Management: Biologist Anderson conducted a routine inspection of one of the gated caves in the Trout Lake area that is home to Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), a medium-sized bat with very long ears. These caves are significant breeding and wintering habitat for these bats, and a gate was installed to protect the most important cave from human disturbance. During this week's inspection, Biologist Anderson again documented a breach in the gate system as vandals had dug under one of the entrances to the cave. Plans are being made to install additional reinforcement to the gate in an attempt to continue the protection of this critical site for local bat populations.



Breached grate protecting cave habitat



Townsend's big-eared bat

Fisher Reintroduction Planning/Coordination: Biologists Stephens and Holman attended a coordination meeting with Listing and Recovery Section Manager Anderson and Biologist Lewis, along with the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Service, and Conservation Northwest. The meeting was in advance of the anticipated second year of fisher releases into the southern Cascades. Captures in British Columbia are set to begin in November, with releases shortly thereafter.

The fisher is a medium-sized weasel which preys upon small mammals, mountain beavers, and porcupines. In turn, fishers are preyed upon by cougars and bobcats. Fishers were completely missing among the Washington State fauna since they were eliminated by unregulated trapping during the mid-1900s. A previous release into the mountains of Olympic National Park has re-established populations there. Twenty-three fishers were released into the southern Cascades during the winter of 2015-16, and only five of these are known to have died during the intervening months. For additional information on the effort to restore fisher populations in Washington, see the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/fisher/>.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Vancouver Lowlands Watchable Wildlife: The fall migration has started, with several avian species moving through the Vancouver Lowlands and the Shillapoo Wildlife Area as they travel to their wintering areas. Northern Canada geese started arriving September 14, which is the earliest date Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald has ever seen them in the area, and is about a week sooner than normal. Currently there are several hundred cackling geese in the area, but this number typically skyrockets to over 15-20,000 geese in a week. Sandhill cranes have also returned and their numbers are increasing on a daily basis as well. Large numbers of white pelicans are also moving through the area. They are typically seen resting on Vancouver Lake and soaring over the Vancouver Lowlands as they migrate. Waterfowl numbers will continue to

increase and the best chances of observing them will be in the harvested cornfields during the morning hours.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Simcoe Mountains Unit: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven is gathering and preparing material (informational material, maps, etc.), installing signs, and building a reader board for the new WDFW property. Van Leuven is meeting staff members from the Central and East Klickitat Conservation District next week to install the materials.

Weed Control: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven spent most of one day treating patches of reed canary grass with herbicide to keep it from overrunning wetlands on the Soda Springs Unit.

Pheasant Release: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven worked with volunteers Morrison and Wheelhouse to distribute pheasants to the three pheasant sites in Klickitat County. Forty birds were released at the Hatchery Unit, 30 went to the Gun Club property, and 10 were released at the Finn Ridge Road property.



Pheasant released at the Hatchery Unit

Conservation District Supervisors' Meeting: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven attended the Conservation District Supervisors meeting. The group appreciated the additional information provided by Regional Program Manager Jonker regarding a few specific topics associated with the

new Simcoe Mountains Unit and future work on the property.

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

Wildlife Management

Checks of Hunter Killed Game Species: With the opener of various hunting seasons in September, Regional Wildlife Program personnel have checked a variety of species at the Regional headquarters in Vancouver. Wildlife checked has included mountain goats, cougars, grouse, bears, and bobcats. Congratulations to the successful hunters.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

New Hunting Blind: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand installed a new hunting blind in the North Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area along with assistance from the Lower Columbia Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA). The local WWA chapter donated the blind to the Wildlife Area, and it will replace the old #4 blind on the

same wetland where it was installed. The blind is positioned in a pasture that floods in the winter and should provide both duck and goose hunting opportunities. A special thank you goes to WWA for all their help in getting the new blind installed at Shillapoo.



Assistant Manager Hand checking out the new blind

Private Lands

Recreational Access: Biologist Meyer extended a public hunting access contract with a landowner in Klickitat County.

Access

Rowland Lake: Engineers began the planning process for installing a new concrete boat launch at the site. Region 5 applied for and received an RCO grant for upgrading the fishing access. Upgrades will include a concrete boat launch, loop approach for easier launching and retrieving, ADA parking and path at the restroom, new parking for trailers, grading, and crushed rock surface. Permits applications will start this year, but the work probably won't start until fall of 2018.

High Use: Access sites across the Region continue to be heavily used. Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes took two trips to the dump to haul over 600 pounds of trash (including a kitchen sink) this week from throughout the access sites.



Shillapoo: It appears a boat was dropped off and abandoned in the parking lot. The trailer was in bad shape and the vessel was full of trash. Tags had not been purchased for many years, but the registration number was visible.

Abandoned boat

Vancouver Lake, Shillapoo, and Langsdorf: Both sites were sprayed with herbicide this week around the restroom and parking lot for brush control. Langsdorf site was quite busy, with the lower lot full and the overflow lot over half full.

Langsdorf lower parking lot

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



Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin is working with volunteers to assist a vineyard in Underwood with installing a fence to deter deer.

Deer Damage: Biologist Meyer and Conflict Specialist Conklin visited a landowner near Goldendale who is experiencing deer damage in his alfalfa and wheat fields. Meyer and Conklin discussed nonlethal and lethal solutions with the landowner.

Cougar: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a landowner who was concerned about a cougar in the area. This particular area has had issues in the past. Conklin will meet with the landowner and provide additional information and outreach to the neighborhood.

Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin escorted a disabled hunter onto a farm in Randle experiencing elk damage to commercial hay crops. The hunter was able to harvest an elk on his second day of hunting. The herd numbers varied from 26 to approximately 50 elk both days of the hunt. In addition, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin deployed two master hunters.



Disabled hunter and his designated hunting companion

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting: Biologist Meyer and Conflict Specialist Conklin attended the Wolf Advisory Group meeting in Issaquah. The group discussed the lethal removal protocol and listened to comments from members of the public.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

ArcGIS Training: Biologist Bergh attended training on the mapping software ArcGIS put on by the King County GIS Center. The training was geared toward intermediate GIS users and

covered a variety of topics from geoprocessing tools to editing to managing data. The instructor was very informative and was also willing to answer individual questions about students' projects in their home agencies.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologists Butler and Tirhi spent an afternoon with volunteers and one USFWS staff member weed-whacking and removing reed canary grass at a Salmon Creek spotted frog breeding site. Plots were begun at the site in 2014 to reduce the amount of area in which canary grass had to be controlled each season (considering shortage of personnel and funds). Each year, canary grass is cut and removed twice in the late summer using employees and volunteers. The goal is to control the height of the canary grass during the following spring breeding season to provide the conditions preferred by spotted frogs for egg-laying. The technique is used on two spotted frog breeding locations (Salmon and Beaver creek) and has been highly successful with the majority of eggs laid in maintained plots.



Salmon Creek Oregon spotted frog oviposition site with maintained plot in foreground and unmaintained reed canary grass in background

The Oregon spotted frog is listed as endangered in the state of Washington, with the most significant factor contributing to its decline being habitat loss. Currently, reed canary grass is being cut and removed from designated plots within this Oregon spotted frog breeding area. This is a part of a study examining the effective plot size of reed canary grass removal to enhance Oregon spotted frog breeding.



Reed canary grass cut and piled



Bringing in some extra help



Piles removed from plot

Fisher Camera Trapping Project (District 16): Biologist Ament and Port Gamble Tribal Biologist Charin Godbolt spent time last week conducting a check of all stations located within Hex 513. This was the second check of the stations for this hex. This hex was monitored during the 2014 season by the District 16 monitoring team and had no fisher detections. Unfortunately, the camera at Station 1 did not work properly during the second week of the monitoring period. It captured photos of a black bear sow with two cubs, but did not work properly after September 7, 2016. This camera was replaced with the one spare camera. The cubby was smashed flat by the bear. One cub climbed up the bait tree. A Douglas squirrel, spotted skunk, deer mouse, Steller’s jay, and gray jay all investigated Station 2. A robin, Steller’s jay, and a spotted skunk were photographed at Station 3. Spotted skunks have been the species most commonly observed at stations this monitoring season. Other unknown sources triggered the camera at Station 3. The photos will be reviewed more thoroughly.



Black bear sow smashing cubby while two cubs observe



One young black bear cub decides to climb the bait tree



Steller's jay and gray jay both drop in for a visit



Spotted skunk looking at cubby at Station 3

Fisher Camera Stations (District 15): In a multi-agency, collaborative effort to document fisher presence on the Olympic Peninsula, Biologist Murphie established three camera/bait stations within survey blocks located near the town of Shelton, WA. Biologist Murphie pulled down camera stations set up near the Cloquallum Road following six weeks of deployment. On the final check of these stations, photos were taken of deer and opossum. Camera/bait stations were established in a new survey hex in the vicinity of the Kennedy Creek drainage. Biologist Murphie conducted the first of three checks of these camera stations this week and reports taking photos of opossums, spotted skunk, rabbit, bear, and deer. Bait was refreshed at each station and will be checked again in two weeks.

Black bears visit one of the fisher camera stations near Kennedy Creek



Injured Bat: Biologist Ament received a call on September 13 from a man from Port Angeles who reported he had collected an injured bat. The bat had nearly all the membrane from the right wing missing. The reporting party thought it highly likely that his cat had injured the bat. Bats are apparently observed flying in the man's house on occasion and his cat attempts to capture them. Biologist Ament contacted two of the listed wildlife rehabbers that specialize in bats. She also consulted with the new WDFW Bat Specialist Abby Tobin. Biologist Ament initiated an effort to possibly have Steve Desimone (in area for the day) transport the injured bat to a rehabber located in Olympia. The rehabber talked with the reporting party and it was determined that the injuries were too extensive for any full recovery. Wing membrane can apparently heal itself in time, but since bone was exposed and damaged, the bat was not collected. The reporting party was told to freeze the bat for future collection after it died.

Taylor's Checkerspot Captive Propagation Program: Following an extensive review of annual reports and spreadsheets from both captive rearing facilities, Biologist Linders convened a meeting with personnel from the Oregon Zoo and TESC-SPP to debrief on the recently completed Taylor's checkerspot captive rearing season and discuss potential changes for 2017. One plan change is to increase production of pre-diapause larvae in order to support an annual release of at least 1000 pre-diapause larvae. Overproduction of pre-diapause larvae has occurred on several occasions in the past, and a recent increase in available funding from the USFWS makes this strategy a sustainable option in the future. Back-to-back pre- and post-diapause releases is consistent with the multi-stage release strategy currently being employed. It has worked to boost numbers at sites where it was done in the past. Other topics of discussion covered at the meeting included protocol updates, refinement of environmental targets (temperature and relative humidity), facilities updates, host plant health and production, and other pertinent items.

Taylor's Checkerspot Reintroduction: Biologists Randolph and Radford entered and completed QC of 2016 distance sampling and post-diapause larval survey data. Randolph developed abundance and distribution maps for five sites throughout the SPS. Biologist Linders developed data summaries, using it to update and write the annual report. She also computed the area occupied by adult checkerspots based on distance sampling surveys at six sites from 2007-2016. Two of the five sites (Range 50 and Scatter Creek South) were especially productive this year, accounting for almost 85% of the 7,400 Taylor's checkerspot observations. Range 76 performed relatively poorly compared to these. Biologist Randolph also collated and mapped scattered checkerspot sightings received from biologists throughout the South Sound to document expansion and dispersal.

Taylor's Checkerspot Rapid Habitat Assessment: Biologists Linders, Randolph, Radford, and Cook completed assessing habitat at occupied and potential future reintroduction sites to evaluate progress in restoring and maintaining habitat. Surveys were completed at five sites (Glacial, Scatter Creek, TA 7S, TA 15, and Tenalquot Prairies) covering over 230 acres in a month-long effort. Biologists Linders and Randolph compiled data and analyses from Rapid Habitat Assessment surveys in 2015 and 2016 for inclusion in the annual ACUB Butterfly Habitat Enhancement report. Linders wrote two major sections of the report, reviewed and commented on the remaining text, and attached several appendices summarizing the RHA methodology, data outputs, and assessment results. Additional assessment is planned for fall 2016, with a goal of pulling all results for both JBLM and ACUB into a single report that captures the entirety of the project to date. Biologist Randolph developed maps displaying more than 20 attributes important to larval and adult checkerspots to support reintroduction and habitat enhancement planning.

Taylor's Checkerspot Habitat Enhancement: Biologist Randolph completed wildland fire training, passed the exam, and received all certificates needed for future prescribed burns. Biologists Radford and Randolph assisted Biologists Hays and Cook with foot and smoke patrols while crews conducted prescribed fires at Scatter Creek North and South units and at West Rocky Prairie. Biologist Radford assisted Biologist Cook with collecting native seeds, preparing prescribed burn units, and helping monitor burn units.



Prescribed fire at Scatter Creek North – Photo by Lisa Randolph

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

Wildlife Management

WA Outdoor Women’s Workshop: Biologist Ament participated in the WOW Workshop at Camp Waskowitz near North Bend last weekend. This was the nineteenth year for the workshop and 130 women from around the state attended the event. Biologist Ament has served as an instructor at the workshop for alternate years starting in 1998. Port Gamble Tribal Biologist Charin Godbolt assisted with the class by helping with display set-up/take down and establishing and removing the wildlife ID trail.

After heavy rains on Saturday morning, the weather improved with a mix of sun and clouds for the weekend. Biologist Ament taught two sessions on Wildlife ID and Awareness. Both classes were full to capacity. WDFW employee Rachel Blomker from Community Relations and Public Affairs was a pleasure to have as a participant in the Sunday class. A wildlife trail was set-up that had 24 stations where participants had to identify what wildlife species had been present. Fresh samples (scat and hair) were obtained from various species from the Olympic Game Farm for use on the trail. A dead weasel and a few bats collected for white-nose syndrome were also used creatively on the trail. The trail was thoroughly enjoyed by the students in her class and several women expressed their appreciation for the effort devoted to establishing the realistic outdoor experience.

Numerous other participants and the WOW staff members expressed their appreciation for the wonderful display that Biologist Ament brings to the workshop. Biologist Ament gave a presentation on bear/cougar interactions to the entire camp Saturday evening. She dedicated her talk in memory of Rocky Spencer. She used the cougar mount and had Biologist Godbolt adorn the bear hide to describe various scenarios of how to react when one encounters these animals. Biologist Ament was able to include some stories related to first-hand experiences with bears in the wild. The talk was scheduled for a half hour, but participants continued to ask questions for nearly an hour longer. She spent a few days last week gathering display items and preparing for

her class. Biologist Ament appreciated being able to borrow the large mounted cougar and other items from the Regional Office.



Wildlife display provided in the classroom at WOW



Rachel Blomker (hat) tries to guess what Washington critter she is



Students reviewing evidence to ID wildlife species on trail



Student Meka'Ta Norman inspects a porcupine quill



One year old Sydney has a cougar encounter

Other

Customer Contacts: Biologist Novack responded to multiple customer service inquiries, such as where to hunt elk, what to do about injured deer, clean up of pheasant release sites, what to do with a dead coyote that behaved funny, how to sample blood from a dead mountain goat, and an inquiry regarding elk damage to fences and landscaping.