



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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June 30, 2017

David Schumacher, Director
Office of Financial Management
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SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR WDFW OPERATIONS ON JULY 1

David:

The following outlines the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (Department) contingency plan for the potential of a government shutdown on July 1, 2017. Following consultation with our Assistant Attorney General (AAG) we believe that the Department's activities associated with protecting and caring for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species of fish and wildlife qualifies as work mandated under federal law. Additionally we would continue some operations funded through the maintenance transportation budget that passed this session as well as strategic use of our non-appropriated accounts to protect and preserve fish and wildlife and to work with livestock producers to mitigate potential depredations associated with wolves. The most immediate visible effects of a shutdown to the public would be the suspension of fish and wildlife enforcement activities, hatchery operations, and closures of most sport and commercial fisheries and boating access sites.

Potential shutdown impacts for WDFW

The potential impacts of a shutdown on our programs and services would be severe. For example:

- Many fisheries would have to be closed, because we would not have staff to monitor, sample, account for the catch, or enforce the regulations.
- We would not be able to issue fishing or hunting licenses, Discover Passes, or other documents through our electronic licensing system.
- The care and feeding of non-ESA listed fish in our hatcheries and captive pheasants at the Bob Oke Game Farm would not occur without trained state employees.
- State wildlife areas and boating access sites would be closed.
- The issuance of Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPAs) would be suspended which would delay new construction projects where an HPA permit is necessary to begin work.

- I want to clarify that we will do everything possible to continue to feed and care for the fish and animals in our hatcheries and other facilities, but under the constraints of a government shutdown I'm not optimistic that we can prevent the loss of life. We are also reaching out to partner agencies to assess options for enforcement activities and other critical functions.

Informing the public if we are forced to close our facilities

Department staff will coordinate all public announcements with the Governor's Office and other state agencies as required. In case we are forced to close our facilities around the state, the WDFW Public Affairs and Outreach office will distribute electronic documents containing signs that can be printed and laminated as needed for posting at access sites, wildlife areas, hatcheries, district and regional offices, and other facilities.

Work Mandated under Federal Law

- **Caring for Fish and Wildlife Species Listed Under the ESA**
The Department will continue to care for and maintain the health of listed species of fish and wildlife that are held captive in a Department controlled facility. We would require 59 FTEs to provide care for ESA hatchery fish, 7 FTEs to respond to maintenance and repair issues at ESA fish producing hatcheries, and 2 FTEs to care for captive breeding Pygmy Rabbits.

Work Funded by WSDOT

- Three FTEs that are funded by WSDOT will continue the repair or replacement of culverts that impede salmon migration under the federal permanent injunction regarding the culvert lawsuit of 2013.

Work Funded by Non-Appropriated Accounts

We plan to utilize non-appropriated funds as authorized in statute in a limited fashion that meets the core needs of the Department's mission and the preservation of state's fish and wildlife resources. WDFW programs that meet these criteria include work supported through non-appropriated accounts for the Rockfish Research Endorsement, and the Coastal Dungeness Crab Account, the Wolf-Livestock Conflict Account, and the Enforcement Reward Account. In addition, we would seek limited Enforcement presence to work with other law enforcement agencies in the event of serious emergencies and limited Wildlife Conflict staff to engage in wolf-livestock mitigation and assessment activities. Some examples are outlined below.

- **Coastal Crab Account**
Two FTEs (enforcement officers) will be funded from this account to keep the coastal crab fishery open for up to two weeks of a government shutdown.

David Schumacher

May 5, 2017

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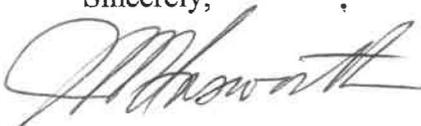
- **Enforcement Reward Account**
Limited funds will be available from this account to allow enforcement officers to respond to fish and wildlife emergencies and to investigate reports of depredations on livestock by wolves should they occur.
- **Wolf-Livestock Conflict Account**
Limited funds will be available from this account to allow Wildlife Conflict staff to work with range riders and livestock producers to mitigate livestock losses to wolves and to assess potential wolf depredation events on livestock.

Issues of special concern to employees

- Plans are being made to ensure that all staff receive paychecks for the pay period ending June 30 as they normally would.
- Health care benefits would continue under the assumption that each employee will work a minimum of eight (8) hours during the month of July.

Finally, I'm especially concerned about the approximately 40 hatcheries that are holding millions of fish but are not related to the exemption provided by ESA federal regulations as well as the captive pheasants at the Bob Oke Game Farm. It would take 49 staff to ensure these fish survive, and 2 staff to maintain the pheasant hatchery in the event of a government shutdown. I hope to get more clarity from the Office of Financial Management on what options are available to prevent this catastrophic waste of state resources and lives of the fish and wildlife we are responsible to care for.

Sincerely,



James Unsworth, Ph.D.
Director