



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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June 15, 2015

David Schumacher
Director
Office of Financial Management
Post Office Box 43113
Olympia, Washington 98504-3113

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR WDFW OPERATIONS ON JULY 1

Dear Mr. Schumacher:

The following outlines the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) contingency plan for the potential of a government shutdown on July 1, 2015. Our Assistant Attorney General has provided legal advice that the WDFW's activities associated with protecting and caring for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species of fish and wildlife qualify 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. 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 the WDFW

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

- Most, if not all, 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.
- We are working to develop contingency plans for the care and feeding of fish in our hatcheries, pheasants at our game farm, and the captive pygmy rabbits.
- Other impacts include the closure of our access sites and suspension of our ability to issue Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPA) which would impact 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, and we are 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

WDFW 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 Endangered Species Act (ESA).** WDFW will continue to care for and maintain the health of listed species of fish and wildlife that are held captive in a WDFW-controlled facility. We would require 59 FTEs to provide care for ESA hatchery fish, and 2 FTEs to care for captive breeding pygmy rabbits.

Work Funded by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

- Three FTEs that are funded by WSDOT will continue to do work that provides fish passage across impassible barriers.

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 WDFW'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 Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Stamp, the Rockfish Research Endorsement, and the Coastal Dungeness Crab Account. In addition, we would seek limited Enforcement presence to work with other law enforcement agencies in the event of serious emergencies. 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.
- **Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Stamp Account**
Forty-three FTEs (31 fishery sampling, management, and hatchery staff, and 12 enforcement officers) will continue their work associated with keeping our recreational fisheries open in the Columbia River Basin, including tributary fisheries, for up to two weeks of a government shutdown.

David Schumacher

June 15, 2015

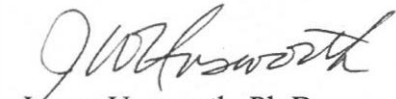
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Issues of special concern to employees

- 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 am troubled about the approximately 40 hatcheries that are holding fish but are not related to the coverage provided by the ESA consideration. It would take 49 staff to ensure these fish survive a government shutdown.

Sincerely,



James Unsworth, Ph.D.
Director