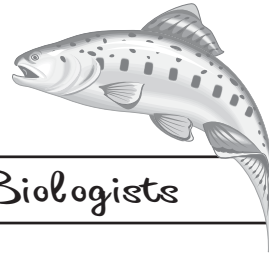
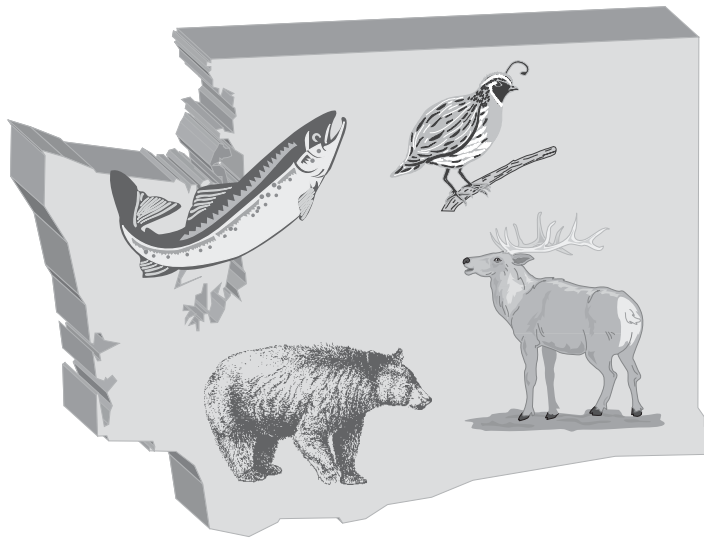


# WAPB Newsletter



Washington Association of Professional Biologists

Fall 2004

## President's Corner

By Steve Bell

### Behind the Scenes

A simple 'thank you' seems insufficient to express our gratitude to Dave Kloempken, Don Nauer and Rhonda Fenrich for their time and energy during contract negotiations. Collectively they put in nearly 1,000 hours of negotiating time to bring us this contract, sometimes working until midnight. A special appreciation goes out to all those members that answered our multiple calls for specific contract items of concern and to the alternates Ruth Milner, Greg Schirato, Jeff Skirletz and Anita McMillan for their willingness to step in at a moments notice if called upon. And finally, **thank you** to all the members who voted to ratify the contract. If you take a moment to review the contact comparison spreadsheet (enclosed) I think you will agree we ended up with an outstanding contract!

The results of this contract should dispel the myth that the "big unions" (i.e. WPEA, WFSE, Teamsters...) would come out on top because they have more members. Because we're membership run, there is no administrative bureaucracy between the union leaders and the people they represent. Your interests are our interests. Each

member in good standing has a vote, and a direct line to the board. The structure of most big unions only allows a regular member one vote in their chapter, and each chapter typically has one vote in their local, and each local has one vote in their union. The opportunity for your voice to be heard in a big union can be quickly diluted. The additional layers of bureaucracy have an added cost to members to pay for overhead, staff and support staff. Their monthly dues are upwards of 1.2% versus our 0.9%.

The value of a good attorney cannot be overstated. WAPB also has one of the nation's premier labor law firms to support us. The same attorney has represented us for 11years. She knows our members, our

issues and our needs. Due to our narrow focus on Fish and Wildlife Professionals, she is able to provide a quality of legal service unheard of in other unions.

WAPB ended up with the same percentage salary adjustment, same insurance rate and better working conditions for our members compared to other unions. You'll read more about the contract in other articles in this newsletter, but the bottom line is this: from the feedback we've received from other unions, our contract is the best in the state. Not necessarily by a wide margin, but we do have several benefits that no one else does. So the next time you see someone who worked on our contract, tell them thanks.

**WEBSITE:** [wapb.olympiaonline.com](http://wapb.olympiaonline.com)



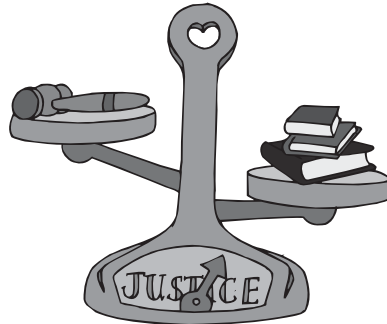
*Check Us Out!*

**EMAIL:** [wapb@olympiaonline.org](mailto:wapb@olympiaonline.org)

**Legal Report**  
by Rhonda Fenrich

**2005 – 2007 Contract Highlights**

Your 2005-2007 Collective Bargaining Agreement has been negotiated and ratified by an overwhelming margin. All seven (7) of the "coalition" unions ratified the proposed agreement. As a result, this agreement will go into effect July 1, 2005 and will expire on June 30, 2006.



The agreement which was reached by the parties preserved most of your current contract's working conditions (home duty stations, exchange time, annual Association meetings, etc.) and was able to improve on the Civil Service Rules which will also be implemented on July 1, 2005. Overall, the contract contains many improvements and protections for you as WDFW employees.

**A few highlights of the new contract:**

1. Overtime after 40 hours in a work week for those employees who are overtime eligible (example: sci techs and Bio 1s and 2s);
2. 174 hours of exchange time for those employees who are over time exempt (formally known as exception work week employees);
3. One paid annual Association meeting per year;
4. A requirement that the Agency must have just cause prior to imposing discipline. For this contract, discipline includes written reprimands, suspensions without pay, demotions and terminations;
5. Maintenance of home duty stations;
6. Maintenance of your ability to attend conferences, presentation of original research at conferences, and maintenance of equipment currently provided by the Agency;
7. Presentation of shared leave, miscellaneous leave, vacation and sick leave;
8. Layoff by seniority only (without factoring in performance evaluations);
9. Effective July 1, 2005 all WAPB members will receive a 3.2% pay increase. This increase will be reflected in the classification pay ranges;
10. Effective July 1, 2006, all WAPB members will receive a 1.6% pay increase. This increase will **not** be reflected in the classification pay ranges as there is no guarantee it will be continued in the next biennium;

Please review your contract on the website and look for Association presentations and training on the new contract as July 1, 2005 nears. The insert in this newsletter shows a comparison of key points between the WAPB contract, the WPEA contract, and unrepresented employees.

**Compensation for 2005-2007**

There are three parts to the compensation package for the 2005-2007 contract: health care, the July 2005 COLA, and the July 2006 "bonus".

**Health Care**

The new contract requires the state to pay 88% of health care premiums with employees providing the remaining 12%. These are the same ratios currently in place and they are the same for all unions.

**July 2005 COLA**

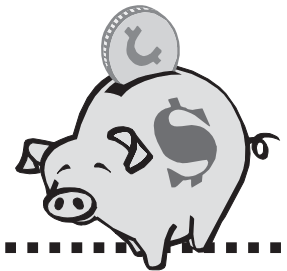
The 3.2% salary increase beginning in July 2005 is a permanent wage increase for all pay ranges covered by this contract. This was the same increase received by the other unions.

**July 2006 "bonus"**

The 1.6% salary increase for the period July 2006-June 2007 is considered a "temporary" increase. Some unions chose to take it as a one-time bonus in July 2006, but it was our belief that including it in our monthly paychecks would improve our bargaining position to make it permanent for the next contract.

**WAPB  
Treasurer Report**

by Kirt Hughes




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Washington Mutual Checking ....	\$68,610.83
WSECU Savings.....	\$8,180.03
WSECU CD .....	\$25,647.80

Total Funds as of 10/8/04 ..... \$102,438.66

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## *New Members Welcomed*

*by Adam Couto*

When the Washington State legislature passed SHB 1286, the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002, suddenly it was fashionable to be in a union. The big unions sent paid recruiters from their corporate offices to gobble up any unrepresented state employees, scaring them with tales of woe into joining their ranks. After discussing the type of union we wanted to be, the WAPB executive board made a decision not to engage in hard sell recruitment tactics. However we would be available to meet with any group interested in joining our union.

The result was an increase of about 60 new members to our WAPB family, increasing our union to a grand total of around 330 members. (Vacancies, reorganizations, and some lingering questions about some accreted positions prevent a more accurate accounting.) For the first time we have welcomed job classes other than biologists to our fold – scientific technicians, research scientists, environmental specialists, fish and wildlife health specialists, lands agents, and information technology application specialists. And yes, we accreted some previously unrepresented biologists as well.

Although the accretion process did not always go smoothly, and in some cases is still in progress, the executive board is proud of the way it conducted itself. Our top priority has been, and continues to be, to conduct ourselves in the most professional and appropriate means possible.

You can read the entire PERC decision in Adobe Acrobat on our website at [http://wapb.olympiaonline.com/pdf\\_files/2004/PERC%208577.pdf](http://wapb.olympiaonline.com/pdf_files/2004/PERC%208577.pdf).

If you have questions about the accretion process, please contact any one of our board members.

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## *Survey Card Class Action Grievance Tentatively Settled*

*by Steve Bell*

Last year the Habitat Program began a new Customer Service Survey. This non-scientific survey was conducted by including Customer Service Cards with each completed HPA. These card asked questions like “Did you receive prompt and timely service from WDFW?” and “Was the information you received helpful?”

Responding to the concerns of our members, WAPB filed a class action grievance citing this as changes in policies and procedures that may affect our members and a Standing Committee was formed to impact bargain these changes. We were concerned that responses on these cards could be used against our members to determine merit pay, in evaluations, disciplines or other personnel actions. After an agreed-to one year trial period, the Standing Committee reconvened last month to settle the issue.

Card responses have been overwhelmingly positive, and management is using these results to counter legislative challenges to the program. In response to WAPB concerns, WDFW agreed that the cards would not be used in evaluations or disciplinary action (unless the card indicates something blatantly illegal such as “the biologist punched me”), and our new contract does not provide for merit pay. The cards will not be kept in personnel files. On the positive side, management is using the many positive responses to defend individual Biologists confronted with citizen complaints. Habitat Biologists can request the Habitat Program send them copies of cards that mention them by name. We recommend you request copies and keep them in your own records. Once the settlement language has been finalized, Habitat Biologists should receive a memo from Program Management. Special thanks to Standing Committee members: Pam Erstad, Don Nauert, Bruce Baker, Adam Couto and Rhonda Fenrich.

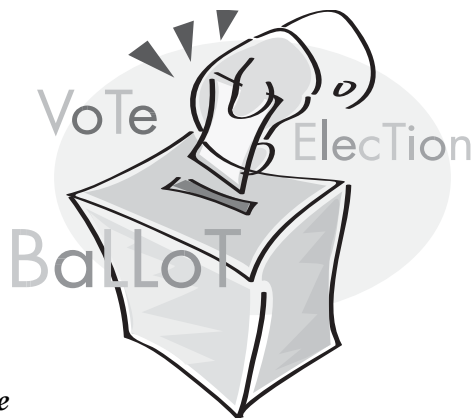
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## *Election Results*

*by Bryan Murphie*

As you all know, Dave Kloempkin (Vice-President) and Lauri Vigue (Treasurer) stepped down from their respective posts this year. They both did a terrific job for WAPB and deserve considerable thanks from all of us.

The election to fill these vacancies took place in August with the ballots being counted during our annual meeting in Ellensburg on August 18th. Kirt Hughes ran unopposed for the position of Treasurer. We were unable to find anyone willing to run for the Vice-Presidential position, so this was left as a Write-in candidate only. A total of 49 ballots were received and counted. Kirt Hughes received 49 votes electing him as our new Treasurer. Adam Couto was elected Vice-President by receiving a majority of the write-in votes. He graciously left his Member-at-Large post and agreed to serve as the new Vice-President. So far, both are doing a great job. Congratulations and thanks to both of you!



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## *Job Reps*

Lynda Hoffman  
*Habitat Program, Region 2*

Jeff Korth  
*Fish Program, Region 2*

David Brock  
*Habitat Program, Region 4*

Julie Stofel  
*Wildlife Program, Region 4*

VACANT  
Region 5

Dave Kloempken  
*Habitat Program, Region 6*

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## *WAPB Emails*

Steve Bell, President  
(stevebell@gocougs.wsu.edu)

Adam Couto, Vice President/Newsletter editor  
(coutoinwa@yahoo.com)

Bryan Murphie, Secretary  
(bmur7@msn.com)

Kirt Hughes, Treasurer  
(kirthughes@centurytel.net)

VACANT, Member at Large

Pat Miller, VP Pilot/Wildlife Program

Bruce Baker, VP Pilot/Fish Program

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# *WAPB*

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