

Editorial-

WDFW Officer Todd Vandivert (Editor)- E-Mail address: bluemountainpolice@comcast.net

This is the first issue of “WASHINGTON GAME WARDEN MAGAZINE, and for many of you, this magazine is your first introduction to the WGA (Washington Game Warden Association). I, therefore, would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the WGA and offer a brief explanation of what the WGA is and where we came from.

The WGA is a fraternal organization representing the Fish and Wildlife Officers of Washington. The WGA was founded in 1985, by Officer Ted Holden (now Sgt. Holden), with the vision of creating an organization which would support WDFW Officers (and their families), in both professional endeavors and to address social/fraternal functions. The idea was that the WGA would be in a position to address professional needs (i.e. - recommendations on regulation changes, equipment needs etc.), as well as providing a social/fraternal platform (support to Game Warden families in times of need/crisis, social gatherings, scholarships, support for charities, etc.). The one thing the WGA clearly steered away from was labor issues. Fish and Wildlife Officers have always been represented by a labor federation, and we wanted to keep the two entities completely separate. Still to this day, the WGA has nothing to do with the labor/management process.

Shortly after the WGA was formed, the idea came up for a WGA magazine. Officer Doug Ward (now Sgt. Ward) volunteered to become the Editor of the WGA magazine- THE INFORMANT. THE INFORMANT turned into a quarterly newsletter, and Doug acted as the Editor until 1997, when I got roped into taking over.

As with many volunteer organizations, the WGA has gone through strong times and times of little or no activity, but one thing has always stymied us- lack of funds. Throughout the WGA’s history, the organization always had lots of good ideas as to how to spend our money on worthy causes, but no money to spend. We have consistently provided funding for scholarships, money and/or flowers for Officer’s families in times of crisis, and sponsorships to outdoor related events/organizations, but at the end of each year we found ourselves broke. Also, because of the lack of funding, we did a pretty poor job at getting the word out to the general public on our association.

In 2005 I had the pleasure of meeting up with several Game Wardens from across North America (at the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association conference) and also on an “Officer Exchange” which I took part in. In those interactions with Game Wardens from other states, I learned of the financial and public relations benefits, they had received, from entering into a commercially produced magazine (trade journal). As a result of those conversations, the WGA eventually entered into a contract with Brent Wyatt West Publishing to produce this magazine. The results of this “marriage” are great; we now are on the way to financial solvency and at the same time are getting our message out to a much wider audience. The WGA looks forward to being able to accomplish things we have only dreamed of previously. Of course, none of this would be possible without all of you who have generously contributed to the WGA through the WASHINGTON GAME WARDEN MAGAZINE. Thank you!

Enough from me; now sit back and take a look at what your Washington Fish and Wildlife Officers are accomplishing. I'm sure you will be impressed.