

# **Chelan Wildlife Area Management Plan**

## **Public Scoping Workshop Summary – Final**

**July 13, 2017**

### **Introduction**

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) hosted a public scoping workshop on Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Chelan County Fire District 1, Station 11, Wenatchee. The purpose of the workshop was to share information about the wildlife area planning process and to solicit public and stakeholder input.

The workshop begins the planning process for developing a new Chelan Wildlife Area Management Plan, one of 33 plans the department will revise over eight years. The plans are updated every two years to reflect changes in landscape and management priorities; however, the larger plan efforts are more comprehensive and consider the status of wildlife species and their habitat, progress towards goals identified in earlier plans, and new wildlife area priorities. The plans will consider the interests and impacts of stakeholders and user groups; set goals for assessing and monitoring ecological integrity; outline forest management priorities; identify appropriate public use, recreation areas and facility improvements; as well as weed control practices and other operations and maintenance practices. Chelan's current plan as developed in 2006, with subsequent updates, are available on the department website at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/management\\_plans/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/).

Twelve people attended and signed in at the workshop including interested parties from Chelan County communities of Wenatchee, Chelan, Mason and Brewster. Stakeholder groups included Audubon, Wenatchee Sportsman Association, Wild Sheep Foundation, Washington Native Plant Society, Lake Chelan Trails/Evergreen Bike Alliance. A representative from Chelan County PUD and WDFW Commissioner, David Graybill attended the meeting.

### **Workshop Format**

The workshop was designed in a combination open house/presentation format. Individual maps of each of the seven wildlife area's units were posted, and participants were encouraged to share specific and general feedback after the presentation and at the map locations.

### **Staff presentation**

Rich Finger, Regional Lands Operations Manager, welcomed everyone and introduced WDFW employees. Melinda Posner, Lands Division planning/public outreach lead gave an overview of the workshop format and reviewed the agenda topics. Other WDFW participants included:

- Ron Fox, Chelan Wildlife Area Manager
- Dave Volson, Wildlife District Biologist
- Travis Maitland, Fish District Biologist
- Graham Simon, Habitat Program
- Eric Oswald, Enforcement
- Eric Boyd, Enforcement
- Lauri Vigue, Project Manager

- Melinda Posner, Lands Division Planning/Public Outreach
- Rich Harris, Game Division

Meeting guidelines:

- We want to hear from everyone
- One person talks at a time
- Refrain from side conversations
- Stay focused on meeting purpose
- Keep comments short – 30 second “big ideas”
- Mute cell phones

Melinda emphasized the early stage in the planning process and the desire to hear from the public and stakeholders about interests, issues, and potential priorities for this wildlife area. Public scoping will include SEPA, shared agency priorities, collecting input and reporting in the plan. She noted multiple methods for providing comments including flip charts notes, writing on the unit maps provided, speaking with staff and sending email comments directly to [chelanwla@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:chelanwla@dfw.wa.gov)

Lauri Vigue, project manager, reviewed the department’s overall process for updating all state wildlife area plans. We have a new Chelan Wildlife Area Advisory Committee for this process with nine members. She noted the following new topics the plan will consider including:

- Wildlife Area Ecological Integrity Monitoring
- Forest Management
- Recreation Management
- Expanded public outreach including public workshops, information materials and Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meetings

Lauri summarized timeline for the Chelan WLA plan; staff expects a draft plan by October, 2017; and potential final plan by end of the year. Lauri introduced Ron Fox, wildlife area manager for Chelan Wildlife Area. Ron provided an overview of each of the seven units describing the current objectives, recreation and original funding source.

### **Swakane Unit**

Overview: 10,939 acres of shrubsteppe, riparian, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, cliffs, talus; 100 acres of abandoned agricultural fields.

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for priority wildlife species (mule deer, bighorn sheep, upland game birds), provide public hunting opportunities.

Recreation: Hunting and fishing, mt biking, bird watching, horseback riding, target shooting

Funding Source: Wildlife Funds, Chelan County Public Utility District

### **Entiat Unit**

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Overview: 7,989 acres of shrubsteppe, riparian, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, cliffs, talus.

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for priority wildlife species (upland game birds, mule deer). Provide public hunting and fishing opportunities.

Recreation: Hunting, fishing and shed hunting

Funding Source: Wildlife Funds, Chelan County Public Utility District

### **Chelan Butte Unit**

Overview: 10,116 acres of shrubsteppe, riparian, cliffs, talus, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer; 1,000 acres of abandoned agricultural fields.

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for priority wildlife species (upland game birds, mule deer, bighorn sheep). Provide public hunting opportunities.

Recreation: Hunting, hang gliding, helicopter tours, mt biking

Funding Source: Wildlife Funds, Chelan County Public Utility District.

Over 200 documented bighorn sheep present; 50 homesteads previously existed, one of which is a National Historic site.

### **White River Unit**

Overview: 429 acres west of Lake Wenatchee on the White River; habitat includes montane riparian woodland-shrubland within the floodplain and montane mixed conifer forest.

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for federally listed steelhead, bull trout and Chinook, provide public hunting opportunities.

Recreation: Hunting, kayaking and canoeing

Funding Source: Recreation Conservation Office – WWRP, Wildlife Funds

### **Pateros Unit**

Overview: 1,217 acres of shrubsteppe, riparian draws, and rocky outcrops.

Current Objectives: Maintain habitat for priority wildlife species (mule deer winter range), provide public hunting opportunities.

Recreation: Hunting, fishing, mountain biking, bird watching and horseback riding

Funding Source: Pittman Robertson, Recreation Conservation Office (WWRP), mitigation and donation

BLM lands that we manage are included on this unit.

### **Beebe Springs Unit**

Overview: 162 acres of shrub-steppe, riparian, cliffs, talus, wetlands.

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for priority fish (steelhead and Chinook) and wildlife species, provide ADA accessible trails, interpretive opportunities and fishing.

Recreation: Fishing, hunting, bird watching, walking

Funding Source: State appropriation

8 miles of ADA trails.

### **Cashmere Pond Unit**

Overview: 21 acres of riparian and Wenatchee River shoreline

Current Objectives: Maintain and restore habitat for priority fish (steelhead, bull trout and Chinook) and wildlife species, provide public fishing opportunities.

Recreation: public fishing

Funding Source: Mitigation transfer (WSDOT)

### **Dave Volson – Wildlife Values on Chelan WLA**

Mule deer and bighorn sheep (high value and high profile) high priority species.

We need dedicated resources to conduct a species inventory – passerine birds, small mammals, amphibians. Western gray squirrel no longer exist on the wildlife area (Chelan Butte Unit)

Priority Projects include weed management and salmon restoration projects.

### **General Comments and Questions at Stations**

What should our priorities be?

#### Fish and Wildlife

- Fragmentation habitat: How to maintain habitat integrity to ensure habitats are connected for wildlife?
- More human/species interaction with residential development, closer to the units
- New residential developments resulting in “islands” of habitat (Chelan Butte and Pateros).  
There are no travel corridors for Chelan Butte, it is an isolated island.
  - How do we protect that remaining habitat?
  - How can we play a role of controlling development?

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- What are the long-term impacts of population growth?
- More population equals more disturbance
- Some activities not compatible with fish and wildlife
- How are other public lands managed (collaborative management planning).
  - DNR – we lease to manage (Swakane, Chelan Butte units)
  - BLM – MOA outdated from the 1960s. What is the chances of a renewal?
  - Are funds available to manage leases with DNR?
- Habitat preservation, acquisition has to be a priority with recreation secondary
- More land use changes, along shorelines, more docks are being built and diminishing the riparian habitat
- Wild Sheep Foundation concerns:
  - Hunter conflict, more people hunting different species
  - Disruption of lambing areas
  - Urban interface, risk of disease transmission
- Deer hunting on Chelan Butte, what is the threshold for capacity for the herd?
- Sheep fence along HWY 97A has been successful in reducing sheep/deer kill. Addition fencing needs to be added in other places.
- Are there key species that help identify effects of climate change? Species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) vulnerability to climate change will be included in the management plan.
- For Chelan Butte, we do not know the extent of species richness (e.g. reptiles) since there is no funding for surveys. There are limited resources to inventory non-game species on the units.
- What percent of income comes from hunting?
- Is there a lot of bitterbrush on the wildlife area? Dryland alfalfa deer prefer. WDFW is seeding Chelan Butte with alfalfa and bitterbrush.
- What is the normal population of deer? Seems to be lower numbers this year. Dave V. – 26% decline due to hard winter – high amount of snow at lower elevations this year.
- It's good to consider Douglas/Chelan counties population growth – forecasts in this planning effort. The population increase will be significant. There are 1,500 homes forecast to be built near the Beebe Springs bridge alone.
- If we allow multiple uses, visitors will increase.
- We need to identify which are the best units to protect with current population projections, (e.g. Chelan Butte Unit surrounded by residential development), identify where WDFW lands are connected with other public lands. What are the best areas to protect, with the greatest long-term benefit? Swakane and Entiat units are near other public lands.
- Consider all priority species on each unit in the plan.
- Will the goals and objectives be specific to the units? Yes.
- Some areas will be more suited for certain types of recreation development.
- Can we protect corridors used by wildlife, especially in areas that are similar to Chelan Butte?
- Consider acquiring lands / exchanging lands to protect with the best ecological benefit. The state of Montana is receiving federal funds for acquisitions.
- The goal should be to restore habitats to historic levels. Goals from different groups should be included in the plans (e.g. restoring bighorn sheep historic areas).
- We need to include all wildlife corridors information in the plan. The Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group information will be incorporated into the plan.
- Pheasant release (example) on Chelan Butte and other release sites.

Are there other groups we should include on the stakeholder list?  
North central Washington Mule Deer Association

Restoration Station:

- Upper Crab Creek butterfly; Wilson Creek area (Lincoln Co.,) Marsh violet, David James – can give more info.

Operations and Maintenance

- HQ location relative to employees and equipment

Recreation and Public Use

- Incorporate the program and learning from the state recreation strategy into this plan even if it's not done

## Notes written on maps

White River: note center above Lake Wenatchee - Upper Basin Birders does survey of 7-10 stations monthly between Fish Lake, Lake Wenatchee, White River, Napeaqua? (protocols established by Heather Murphy).

Pateros: note on Methow River, lots of birding activity in the past from Methow mouth to 1<sup>st</sup> set of islands – lots of development/land use changes – fewer birds.

May annual breeding bird survey done in conjunction with Dana Visalli and Methow Valley Birders – bird from the Columbia to Washington Pass in one day. Start at junction of Methow/Columbia River.

Beebe Springs: parkin lot here – bird length of Beebe twice a month, 120 total species. Lead NCWAS field trips in spring.

North part of Beebe Springs: Native American cultural site. Good birds here. Fence could it be moved to allow birding access? Or keeping people out protects birds?

Changes in bird life, orchard to shrub-steppe, changes in land use.

Swakane: map has a circle along Swakane Canyon Rd “most popular target shooting”  
At parking lot symbol (park for hike), have hiked with family twice. Bird each year during Wenatchee Christmas Bird Count.

Chelan Butte: Note upper right corner, increase in back-country skiers and hikers.  
Downie Canyon Rd – Bird this road 3-5 times per year, especially looking for mountain and western bluebirds and raptors.

North – Chelan Butte Rd. – park where paved road becomes dirt and walk and bird two miles after, 5-8 times per year. Hummers, flycatchers, white headed woodpecker, raptors. Great variety of species due to mixed habitat.

Chelan Butte lookout – Drive/walk 3-4 times a year. Look annually for Lewis' woodpecker that nest in woods by launch for hang gliders.

Chelan PUD Reach 1 Trail (potential trail connection) (Howser Rd). NE Chelan Butte Trail and Chelan Gorge Rd. Park at foot of hill past junk yard.

## **Additional Comments Received**

Following are areas of interest that the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association (WSA) would like to see included in the current (2017) review and update of the Chelan Wildlife Management Plan (CWMP):

Sufficient funding for management of habitat and restoration of habitat in areas disturbed by fire and/or erosion

Enforcement funding adequacy for resource protection

Control and/or eradication of noxious weeds

Access for hunting and hiking and biking on public lands to including recreation easements across private lands where applicable

Thank you for your consideration of these topics of interest for the CWMP review/update,

Sincerely, Jerry Gutzwiler, WSA, President

## **Meeting Materials**

The following meeting materials are attached:

- Agenda
- Chelan Wildlife Area Management Plan Fact Sheet
- Workshop Postcard
- News release