

Chelan Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Meeting

Final Meeting Notes

June 27, 2017

Chelan County Fire District 1, Station 11

6:00-8:30 pm

Attendees:

WAAC Members:

Bill Stegeman
Sam Lain
Graham Grant
Jason Lundgren
Von Pope
Eric Ellis
Paul Willard

WDFW Staff:

Ron Fox
Rich Finger
Lauri Vigue

Welcome and Introductions

Ron Fox, Chelan Wildlife Area Manager welcomed everyone. Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) members and WDFW staff introduced themselves. This is considered a new WAAC developed for the planning process. Lauri Vigue, Planning Project Manager, explained the focus of the meeting is to provide a description of WAAC roles and expectations, overview of the wildlife area planning process, and timeline. Ron will provide a draft list of wildlife area issues developed by internal scoping and an overview of the wildlife area units.

Chelan WLA Planning and Process

The primary purpose of this meeting is to introduce the wildlife area management planning process to this committee. The goal is to develop a wildlife area management plan for the Chelan Wildlife Area. The agency mission and strategic plan were introduced. An overview of Chelan WAAC roles and expectations, contributions and responsibilities were provided; as well as the planning team responsibilities. A summary of the purpose of the plan, Framework document, forest planning, recreation strategy was introduced.

The Chelan WLA planning process begun in March 2017; an internal scoping meeting was held in April, the public meeting will be held on July 13th; and the first planning meeting will be held on August 10th.

Planning Timeline (estimated)

Chelan WAAC	June - October 2017 (~2 meetings min)
1 st Public meeting	July 13, 2017
2nd Public meeting	October - November 2017
Planning meetings	August - October (~3-4 meetings)
Final Draft Plan	December 2017

Wildlife Area Overview

Operations and maintenance funding is provided by the following funding sources:

- Pittman Robertson
- Discovery Pass
- Wildlife Account

Swakane Unit: 10,939 acres; original purchase funded by Chelan PUD, Wildlife Funds; habitat includes: shrubsteppe, riparian, ponderosa pine, ag fields. Key species: mule deer, bighorn sheep, upland game birds; recreation – hunting and fishing

Entiat Unit: 7,989 acres; original purchase funded by Chelan PUD, Wildlife Funds; habitat includes: shrubsteppe, riparian, ponderosa pine. Key species: mule deer, upland game birds, riparian and forest dependent species; recreation – hunting, fishing, shed hunting

Chelan Butte: 10,116 acres; original purchase funded by Chelan PUD, Wildlife Funds; habitat includes: shrubsteppe, riparian, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer. Key species: upland game birds, mule deer, bighorn sheep, western gray squirrel (pre-fire); recreation – mt biking, hiking, hang gliding

White River: 429 acres; original purchase funded by RCO, Wildlife Funds; habitat includes: montane riparian woodland-shrubland, high elevation montane mixed conifer forest. Key species: steelhead, bull trout, Chinook; recreation - hunting

Pateros: 1,217 acres; original purchase funded by RCO, Pittman Robertson; habitat includes: shrubsteppe, riparian. Key species: mule deer winter range; recreation - hunting, fishing, bird watching

Beebe Springs: 162 acres; original purchase funded by state appropriation; habitat includes: shrubsteppe, riparian, wetlands. Key species: steelhead, Chinook, shrubsteppe, riparian and wetland dependent species; recreation – fishing, bird watching, hiking, hunting (world class birding)

Cashmere Pond: 21 acres; original purchase funded by WSDOT transfer; habitat includes: riparian and shoreline. Key species: steelhead, bull trout, Chinook; recreation - fishing. At least two salmon restoration projects are in place.

Issues List

The internal scoping process identified the following preliminary issues that will be addressed in the new plan:

- Focal species includes, mule deer, bighorn sheep, salmon, non-game (Diversity species)
- Salmon recovery
- Rare plants (e.g. globe mallow –Chelan Butte)
- Western gray squirrel
- Giant Palouse earthworm
- Shrubsteppe restoration
- Forest planning
- PUD funded restoration
- Capacity and operations and maintenance funding
- Wildlife area infrastructure and headquarters
- Off-road travel and mountain biking
- Target shooting
- Trail systems difficult to enforce

Chelan WLA WAAC Comments

Von Pope – Is shed hunting an issue? Ron described units with most activity.

Bill – Noticed digging around homestead locations (metal detectors) and mentioned that holes are not refilled.

Bill – Chelan Butte County Road, motorcycles travel at high speeds. Ron Fox described limits on the crossover road (county road). Spring mudding occurs here. Graham questioned whether county would be willing to vacate or limit it. Von mentioned that seasonal closures have worked elsewhere. Bill mentioned potential for conflicts during hunting seasons.

Paul – With regards to trails, mentioned the importance of educating folks early on with regards to hunting seasons and respecting hunters by avoiding trails during morning when hunting season ongoing. Provide information at trailhead for recreationists and hunters to minimize conflict. Graham agreed and mentioned that once a foothold is gained by recreationists they often use their commissioners to enact firearm restrictions, but overall believed there was potential to be compatible.

Graham – Is there prospecting in Oklahoma Gulch? Merle Lowden (retired dentist with a claim).

Rich proposed the possibility of increasing the WAACs scope to include Wells Wildlife Area. In general there were concerns and lack of interest. Graham mentioned different dynamic between the areas that would make for a large WAAC. Private ag interests and T&E species issues from Wells don't jive well with Chelan issues. Von felt it could be done, would take longer, so would want to do meetings separately.

Paul - Asked about how WDFW management plan works on lands other public lands not owned by WDFW, e.g. BLM and USFS. Federal agencies are invited to attend the WAAC and public meetings. WDFW staff have the option of having additional focused meetings with federal agencies. We can also build in objectives into the new plan that include building collaborative relationships with other agencies, these topics are often issue specific, for example forest planning or road management.

Erik – BLM has an MOU from 1968 for Swakane, Entiat, and Chelan Butte that identifies what WDFW basically a guidance document. Since it is not feasible to renew each MOU on all state lands (as was the case with the Klickitat WLS), ideally, we should have a state level MOU for all WDFW/BLM managed lands. Instead there is a new programmatic NEPA process developed for post fire restoration. Results in pre-approval for WDFW for the methods identified in NEPA permit. 'Determination of NEPA Adequacy' document. Coverage of this is specific to Wenatchee Field Office jurisdiction. BLM's draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) is due out this fall.

Jason - White River – Logging and grazing legacy is still impacting habitat. The forest assessment describes the current forest conditions. Culvert removal planned for this summer. There are opportunities for forest restoration but it's a low priority due to lack of available funding. Was old growth cedar that could fall and dam the river. Now dominated by fir.

Paul asked about Recreation Planning Process. It's still in early stages of development. Will be able to provide more information at next meeting. Hopefully the Chelan WLA plan will include early products from the recreation strategy process.

Jason had a comment about the Restoration Pathway process (coordinates review of aquatic restoration projects) - Need to try to continue to hone in. Painful process with many levels of review from WDFW and other regulatory authorities.

Ron Fox added issue of Cultural Resource Protection, specifically the Lucas Homestead on Chelan Butte and Depner Cabin.

Volunteer Registration: We highly encourage WAAC members to volunteer on the agency website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer>

The benefits of registering are that members are eligible for mileage reimbursement. Bill's response was that the volunteer mileage reimbursement is cumbersome and needs to be streamlined, too much paperwork. Lauri offered assistance to make it easy for the group.

The draft stakeholder database was routed for comments, missing organizations and individuals: add the following: Coastal Conservation Association; county commissioners Overbay and Goehner – "Lake Wenatchee guy"

Should we have a wildlife area tour in the fall? TBD. After the plan is drafted we may schedule to allow specific "issue" areas to be discussed, and that a site visit may be warranted. Consider inviting local elected officials.

Comment Sheet Feedback

(Comments received from Sam Lain and Jason Lundgren)

Interests

- Maintaining and restoring floodplains and fish habitat.
- Wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing and hiking.

Frequency of Use (number of visits per season)

Areas Visited	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Swakane			2	
Entiat		2	3	
Chelan Butte			20	20
White River	1	1	1	
Pateros				
Beebe Springs	2	2	3	3
Cashmere Pond				

Recreation Pursued at Oak Creek

- Hunting (Swakane, Chelan Butte, White River, Pateros)
- Wildlife viewing (Swakane, Chelan Butte, Pateros)
- Dog walking (Swakane, Chelan Butte, Pateros)
- Hiking (Swakane, Pateros)
- Other – mushrooms (Chelan Butte)

- Upland bird hunting, chucker, mule deer hunting on Chelan Butte

Wildlife, fish or habitat Interests

- River and floodplain habitat restoration along all fish bearing streams

Recommended Changes or Improvements

- Work with stakeholders and partners to leverage funding to identify and implement fish habitat restoration efforts on lands that have been degraded.

Land Management Activities

- Habitat restoration on all units, i.e., White River and Entiat
- There is a need to improve cover for deer and game birds on Chelan Butte.

Additional Feedback

- Find operations and maintenance funding to maintain WDFW lands!

Next steps:

- Public meeting July 13th
- Planning team develops goals and objectives, draft plan expected in September
- WAAC reviews draft plan September/October
- Public review draft fall 2017

Action items for the group

- Provide comments on the charter by July 14th
- Fill out comment sheet at WAAC or public meeting.
- Register as a volunteer