

## Colockum Wildlife Area Advisory Committee

### Meeting Summary

Thursday, March 12, 2015

Wenatchee DOT, 6 – 8 p.m.

#### **WAAC Members:**

Bill Stegeman, Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association

Norm Gutzwiler, Stemilt Partnership/Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Ken Bailey, Back Country Horsemen

Jim Burts, Apple Valley Snowmobile Club

Lee Davis, Kittitas County Field and Stream Club

Ken McNamee, WA Department of Natural Resources

Pam Camp, WA. Native Plant Society

#### **WDFW Staff Attendees:**

Pete Lopushinsky, Colockum WLA Manager

Melinda Posner, Planning, Recreation and Outreach Section Manager

Jim Brown, Region 2 Director

Scott McCorquodale, Region 3 Wildlife Program Manager

Jeanne Demorest, WLA Planner

John Hagan, Assistant Wildlife Area Manager

#### Welcome & Introductions:

Melinda Posner (WDFW) welcomed the group and introduced WLA Manager Pete Lopushinsky. Introductions were made around the room.

#### WAAC Administration:

- Naming: CAG vs. WAAC
  - Statewide guidance has been updated and expanded so that WAAC members represent a larger user group rather than individual citizens. The change in name from Citizens Advisory Group to Wildlife Area Advisory Committee reflects this.
- Public input at WAAC meetings
  - There was discussion about ways to receive public input during WAAC meetings. This could be at the end of the meeting during a specified timeframe. Another option is to gather input during specific discussion items when a subject matter expert is present in the audience.
  - The group agreed that there should be time set to receive public input. One suggestion was to do this after each agenda item and the WAAC agreed to this.
  - Another suggestion was to use comment cards so people can write down their comments and turn them in at the end of the meeting to be recorded. This would allow those who don't feel comfortable speaking during the meeting a chance to give input. The WAAC agreed.

- Membership
  - There was discussion about how members are chosen for the WAAC. The process is outlined in the Department's Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Guidance Document (February, 2014). They include:
    - Submittal of a letter of interest to WDFW
    - Review of the letters by staff
    - Regional Wildlife Program Managers make the final decision on WAAC membership
  - Discussion about WAAC membership:
    - Audubon will be appointing someone to represent them on the committee
    - Suggestions were to add someone to represent the following groups: adjacent landowner/permittee, mountain bikers, non-motorized winter recreation and motorized recreation. There was concern that Kittitas County is not adequately represented on the WAAC.
    - The WAAC agreed that diversity is what the group is looking for – both in area of interest and geography.
    - The WAAC agreed to recruit new members to broaden the composition of the group.
      - A news release will be developed that includes map to help avoid confusion between other processes that are going on concurrently and a roster and the charter.
      - Letters of interest should be submitted to the Wildlife Area Manager
  - Meeting times and locations were discussed
    - The WAAC agreed on 2 – 3 meetings per year – more if important issues needed to be covered and that evening meetings (6-8 p.m.) worked best.
  - A note that the WAAC is not a decision-making entity will be added to each agenda.
- Public comments:
  - None on this topic.

Draft Charter:

- **Please send comments to Pete by March 27<sup>th</sup>**
- Alternates and acceptable number of absences were discussed. **WAAC members:** Pay special attention to the portion that pertains to absenteeism.
- The WDFW mission statement will be added to the Charter

Wildlife Area Management Plan Update:

- 2014 update
  - After the fire DFW attempted a timber salvage that didn't go through. Now they are working on hazard tree removal along roads. This will take time and isn't hindered by lawsuits or other agencies. There hasn't been any formal assessment of all of the trees along roads, but a consultant did help identify immediate hazards which were removed.

- The question of whether the wood could be taken for firewood to help get it out of the way. There is a WAC that prohibits this.
- There is a RCO grant for some restoration (\$250,000.00) in the system, but it may not be funded. The Arbor Day Foundation and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation have grants available too. The committee offered to write letters and be “partners” for grant applications.
- DFW just hired a forester for Oak Creek WLA and a statewide forester. Another statewide forester will be hired soon.
- Flooding and the road damage related to it were discussed.
- DNR land exchange in the Stemilt basin is completed.
- Stewardship accomplishments
  - Stray Gulch and Tekison abandonments are done. A new road was constructed in Stray Gulch – legislatively mandated. It is further away from the creek and is not open yet, waiting for grass seed to take hold and for the prism to firm up. May be open for the spring turkey hunt (April 16).
  - Volunteer project updates are included in the update too.
  - Boat ramps were closed during the Wanapum drawdown and were upgraded. They will open when the pool is filled later this spring.
  - Discussion about guzzlers and sage grouse – federal study says that they may not be conducive to the grouse. Need to look into this as it relates to the management plan.
  - **Please provide comments on the plan update to Pete by March 27<sup>th</sup>.**
  - The WDFW weekly wildlife reports were suggested as a way for the WAAC to keep current on WLA management.
- Public comment:
  - There were no comments.

### Stemilt Basin Update

- Around 2007 DNR was selling the parcels in the Stemilt basin for agricultural development. DNR's mission is to manage lands in trust for income production and selling these lands would have provided income. The Partnership started as a group that wanted to find a way to keep these parcels in public ownership. They developed a vision document that included wildlife, water resources, and recreation. Several sections of LVF were purchased as a part of this by Chelan County. Two DNR parcels were purchased by WDFW through a legislative process. The LVF parcels are managed by WDFW but management is funded through the county. All of the lands will be administered by WDFW – they are not a part of the Colockum WLA but are managed by the WLA because of geographic proximity. The group is developing operating principles to help advise the department on management. This will implement the community vision on the ground.
- The final product remains to be determined, but this area will most likely be managed as a part of the Colockum Wildlife Area.

- Disposition of the other two DNR parcels was discussed. There is a MOU signed by the Agency Directors to develop a purchase and sale agreement. There is some disagreement over value and part of the purchase and sale development will be to write specific appraisal instructions to appropriately capture the value and satisfy the needs of both agencies.
- Public comment:
  - There were no comments.

#### Naneum Recreation Plan Update:

- The plan was a joint effort by DNR and DFW to develop a blueprint for management of this area. It does not address every aspect of use on the land – (as with hunting which is covered by other regulations and rules).
- The plan was developed to help address new recreational uses and minimize conflicts between recreational activities and environmental concerns
- A committee was formed to help write the plan. It turned out to be more complicated and time-consuming than originally anticipated. The plan that was written was accepted by the committee and signed this winter by the agency heads.
- The document has two different approaches in it
  - Part is very detailed and part is more conceptual. The more conceptual portions will require additional planning prior to implementation.
  - Neither agency had any new money to implement the plan – the plan will help to get funding by providing the basis of what needs to be done on the landscape.
  - How this plan fits with the Colockum WLA plan and what the role of the WAAC will be has not been completely ironed out. DNR and DFW will meet early next month to discuss implementation and funding.
  - The agencies need to review projects with respect to their separate legal obligations and other plans/processes – once that screening is done the WAAC will have a role in the implementation.
  - Input from the public indicated they got most of what they wanted in the plan.
  - WDFW – main focus will be on
    - Green dot road management
    - Seasonal closures
    - Other road issues
  - The document is available on the website.

#### Public Comment:

- There were no comments.

#### Decisions:

- Time will be allotted at the end of each discussion topic for public comment.
- Comment cards will be provided at each meeting as an alternate way to provide public comment.
- Steps will be taken to recruit new members
- There will be 2 – 3 meetings per year, more if issues arise that warrant additional meetings.

WDFW Tasks:

- Develop outreach for additional WAAC members
- Update the Charter with input from the WAAC
- Add decision-making text to future agendas

Public comment:

Lana Thomas-Cruse, Ellensburg

- Does not represent a group
- Recreates in the Colockum/Quilomene/Whiskey Dick 2 days a week all year long
- Expertise in public involvement from career at WSU
- Here to observe the process
- Appreciated the discussion to assure public participation and more representation from Kittitas county
- Looks forward to seeing the WAAC website with updates/notes and future meeting dates