

L. T. Murray Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Input

The WAAC meeting was held on October 23rd, 2019 and attended by the following members: Marc Eylar, Bill Essman, Bridget Wood, Joe Smith, Dick Carkner, Russ Stingley, and Tina Short. Melissa Babik was the WDFW staff member present. No community members were present.

Meeting Summary:

The meeting coordinator went over the role of WAAC members and encouraged members to disseminate information back to their user groups.

Managing Wildlife Populations

Elk numbers are still below objective in the Colockum and Yakima herds. Sampling showed bull : cow ratio and cow : calf ratios were at objective for the Colockum herd. Ground sampling was not sufficient for the Yakima herd so ratio data is not reliable.

WDFW is initiating an effort to reduce the number of pneumonia shedders in the Umtanum Big Horn Sheep Herd. Hunters were used in the fall of 2019 to reduce the herd size and staff will follow up with test and cull procedures in the winter of 2020 and 2021. A WAAC member offered his knowledge of where the sheep hang out on private property for winter capture efforts.

Elk hoof disease has not spread east of Trout Lake yet. A WAAC member suggested placing sampling barrels similar to the grouse wing collectors to gather more hoof samples. The WDFW reporting tool is: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/2eb28165b335452c9a44aedfb79799f1>

The first case of White Nose Syndrome in bats was found east of the Cascade Mountain in Cle Elum. WDFW is looking for winter hibernacula and summer roost sites. The reporting tool for sick or dead bats is: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/47c26e282e244367b9920249626c666d> The reporting tool for a group of bats is: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/dda6a0f6a2034c4b997ca108884a5c8c%20>

Providing Recreational Opportunities

WDFW continues to offer recreational opportunities to family reunions, fun runs, poker rides, and ATV tours through the Special Use Permits.

WDFW continues to release over 300 pheasants annually on the LT Murray WLA.

Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

WDFW staff gave an update on the draft target shooting WAAC changes. The goals were to promote public safety and improve consistency with DNR target shooting rules. The draft rule change worked to define a proper backstop and target placement in relation to the backstop.

WDFW staff is working with groups such as the Girl Scouts of America to build more curriculum and educational tools for outreach.

WDFW staff is partnering with Mountains to Sound Greenway to improve 7 kiosks across the wildlife area to provide outreach to users.

Conserving Natural Landscapes

WDFW staff are working to reduce weeds, create a weed management plan, install signage, and reduce motorized travel on nongreen dot roads on the newly acquired Legoman acquisition. A WAAC member questioned if all the roads on the newly acquired sections are open to motorized travel. WDFW staff explained that the roads surrounding the newly acquired sections have been nongreen dot roads for many years and that the acquisition has not changed their status. A WAAC member reminded the group that changes to the Green Dot Road Management System are announced in the spring public meeting.

WDFW staff gave an update on the progress of the Western Migration Corridor Project. To date volunteers have removed 1.5 miles of relic barbed wire.

WDFW staff provided an update on restoration actions for the Teanaway Valley Unit, Wood Fiesta Phase 2, the completion of a forest stand exam, Hutchins Prescribed Burn, PCT of Tamarack Springs, and weed management in the Mile Post 22 fire footprint and a White Top control project. Staff also presented upcoming stream restoration projects in NF and SF Manastash as well as Taneum Creeks.

WLA Operations

WDFW staff gave an update on the Lands Showcase and upcoming WLA management plans.

WAAC Member Comments:

One member felt this was more work accomplished on the Murray in a long time.

Another member would like to see continued weed control efforts and suggested spraying remote areas using mules.

One member wondered if Poison Ivy was sprayed on the WLA. Staff responded that it is a native and it is only sprayed where it is likely to come in contact with people (parking areas).

One member suggested developing springs for wildlife.

One member would like to see only local hay purchased for elk feeding to reduce the spread of weeds. Staff responded that WDFW staff inspects all hay for weeds. Additionally, hay is quite costly and even without the budget shortfall WDFW would not likely be able to purchase enough hay for all the feed sites.