

Okanogan Valley (Sinlahekin & Scotch Creek) Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Charter February 2, 2015

Introduction

Each of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Wildlife Areas is guided by a management plan. Over the next 10 years, new plans will be developed to reflect current conditions and support WDFW's mission: *To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.*

These plans will be written with input from the public and interested stakeholders, including a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC). This charter provides the purpose and responsibilities of the WAAC and agency staff during the development of this plan.

Purpose

The purpose of the WAAC is to provide input during the development and implementation of the new Okanogan Valley Wildlife Areas Plan that will include the Sinlahekin and Scotch Creek Wildlife Areas and their associated units.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Membership

WAAC members represent a range of interested stakeholder groups who are impacted by, or have an interest in, management activities on the Wildlife Areas. WAAC members:

- Represent a group or organization interested in wildlife area planning and management issues
- Are committed to sharing information and bringing feedback from their respective constituents to the WAAC
- Are interested in and committed to working collaboratively, and
- Understand and are comfortable with serving in an advisory capacity

A roster of current members is attached.

WAAC Member Role & Responsibilities

The role of the WAAC is to provide input and perspective for WLA planning and management activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Be Informed and prepared for all meetings - Review information, discuss issues with staff and other committee members, and provide input during the development of the plan
- Fairly and equitably represent concerns of those they represent - Serve as spokespersons for respective interest groups, reporting back to agency staff and the WAAC about the interests and concerns of stakeholders

- Identify an alternate who will serve when and if the primary representative is unable to participate. (Continuity is especially important as there will be a limited number of meetings and each meeting will build on the material covered at previous meetings);
- Be a sounding board for WLA planning and management activities
- Identify issues of concern
- Effectively communicate WDFW goals and Wildlife Area activities to the public outside of WAAC meetings
- Act in an advisory capacity, providing input to staff that will be considered in WDFW's decision-making process
- Acknowledge and accept that the process will provide only limited time to delve into all wildlife issues

WDFW Wildlife Area Planning Team Role & Responsibilities

The Planning Team consists of staff from WDFW headquarters in Olympia, Sinlahekin and Scotch Creek WLAs as well as specialists from other areas of the state. These include planners; wildlife, fish and habitat biologists, and GIS/mapping staff.

The role of WDFW staff relative to the WAAC is to facilitate effective input in Wildlife Area planning and management activities. Staff will seek advice and guidance about plan objectives, proposed actions and planned management activities from the WAAC.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Develop productive agendas that clearly outline the desired outcomes of each meeting
- Facilitate effective meetings and dialogue with WAAC members
- Develop materials and work products for WAAC review
- Distribute materials at least one week in advance of WAAC meetings
- Lead and facilitate WAAC meetings
- Present information at WAAC meetings
- Develop and distribute WAAC meeting summaries
- Engage WAAC members in other related public involvement efforts, including at least one public meeting
- Engage in discussion, answer questions and be transparent about department processes, policies and decision-making, as appropriate
- Consider and utilize WAAC input in making sound and informed decisions
- Focus WAAC members' time and discussion on key wildlife area plan components, questions and decision points

WAAC Operating Guidelines

The following guidelines are recommended for productive discussion and forward progress:

- Attend all WAAC meetings
- In addition to local views, bring a regional perspective to the table
- Outside of WAAC meetings, represent your personal views and/or views of your respective agency or organization, not views of entire WAAC
- Coordinate the participation of WAAC alternate members when not able to attend meetings, briefing and prep alternates in advance
- At WAAC meetings, discuss issues and concerns in a productive manner
 - All members are expected and encouraged to participate
 - All members have the chance to be heard; no member should dominate
 - Share all pertinent information
 - Keep an open mind
 - Actively listen
 - Treat others with respect

Public Comment

The purpose of WAAC meetings is primarily for WAAC member discussion. However, this can be supplemented and enhanced with input from other members of the public and interested parties. WAAC meetings are open to the public and input will be encouraged. Public comment will be accepted at any time during WAAC meetings unless the number and duration of public comments limits WAAC members' opportunity for discussion. Public comment will be a standing item on WAAC agendas.

WAAC Decision-Making

While not a voting or political group, the WAAC will provide valuable input to the process. For each issue that comes before the WAAC, the project team will seek input and reactions. Through leadership and facilitation, the planning team will solicit and listen to input, identify and understand the root of divergent opinions, and work towards group agreement. While consensus is not required, the WAAC will have greater influence on shaping the plan if they are able to reach agreement. Staff will consider all WAAC input in refining the plan, and communicate reasons for not including input, as appropriate.

Wildlife Area Planning & Decision-Making Process

Steps in the planning process will be shared at the first WAAC meeting. The plan will be written by Wildlife Area planners, who will work directly with the Planning Team (made up of scientists, wildlife area managers and other experts) to develop technical components and recommendations. After SEPA the plan will be approved by the Lands Division Manager and ultimately by WDFW Director. The sequence of plan development and review will be as follows:

- Planning Team develops plan objectives and gathers input from WAAC & public

- Planning Team reviews input and develops draft plan
- WAAC reviews and provides input
- Draft plan presented for public input
- Planning Team considers public input, makes appropriate revisions
- WAAC reviews, provides final comments and endorses final plan
- Planning Team finalizes plan
- Plan submitted for SEPA review
- Lands Division Manager approves final plan
- WDFW Director approves final plan

Meeting Schedule

The WAAC is expected to meet at least three times to complete the new plan.

- The first meeting was held on February 11, 2015.
- The second meeting is expected to be held in the summer of 2015, when a draft plan has been developed, and prior to the draft plan being presented at a public meeting.
- The third meeting will be held after public and other comments have been incorporated, and prior to plan adoption by WDFW.

WLA Planning Team Points of Contact

The following staff will lead the Okanogan Valley Wildlife Areas Management Plan. Members are encouraged to contact staff at any time with questions or comments.

Staff	Role	Contact Info
Jim Olson	Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Manager	jim.olson@dfw.wa.gov (509) 826-4430
Justin Haug	Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Manager	justin.haug@dfw.wa.gov (509) 223-3358
Jeanne Demorest	Planning Project Manager	jeanne.demorest@dfw.wa.gov (509) 457-9313
Melinda Posner	Wildlife Area Planning Manager and Outreach Lead	melinda.posner@dfw.wa.gov (360) 902-2365