



MARCH 25, 2020

February 2020 Flood Event

As you are all aware, the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area, Camp Wooten ELC, and the Umatilla National Forest sustained significant damage in the February flood event. The Tucannon River was running down the Tucannon Road between the Watson Lake Parking Area and Campground 4 which resulted in the asphalt being undermined and large chunks being floated away. The farther south you travel the worse the damage is, and not necessarily from the Tucannon River. There were several rock and mudslides over the road where the draws blew out from the rain on snow event.

The Tucannon Road is owned and maintained by the USFS from just north of the Wooten Headquarters to the ends of

the roads at Sheep Creek and Meadow Creek. USFS brought in a contractor on March 13 to begin clearing debris from the road and unplugging or replacing culverts under the road. The goal of this first phase is to reconnect the drainage before the actual spring runoff occurs and to make the road passable for Administrative travel to continue cleaning up the mess and repairing damage.

The levee around Camp Wooten ELC held and protected the Camp from the River, however the draw behind the Camp blew out and the creek caused significant damage to parts of the Camp. State Parks staff are working hard to repair the damage and are hoping to get the Camp open later this Spring.

The W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area sustained significant damage in places. The footbridge to Watson Lake was washed out and will need to be replaced with a new bridge due to the damage the old bridge sustained. Campground 9 is currently under approximately 14-foot of rock from the draw behind it blowing out. At this time WDFW does not plan to reopen Campground 9 and will go back to just having 10 campgrounds instead of 11. The River jumped its banks and was running through Deer Lake causing Deer Lake to flow over its banks which resulted in damage to the dam around the lake. Deer Lake is currently open to fishing but the dam is being inspected for any possible damage.

Cleanup will be an ongoing process and I will try to keep you updated.



2-7-20 North of Hartsock Grade



2-7-20 Hartsock Unit



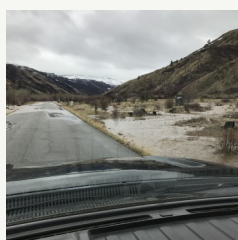
2-7-20 Russell Unit



2-7-20 Behind Headquarters



2-7-20 Spring Lake Overflow Parking



2-7-20 Campground 4



2-7-20 Past Campground 4

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More Photos of February 2020 Flood



2-8-20 Watson Lake Footbridge



2-8-20 The "Postcard"



2-10-20 Rock Slide at Curl Lake



2-9-20 Fish Trap at Rainbow Lake Inlet



2-9-20 Washed-out Asphalt South of Campground 4



2-9-20 Washed-out Asphalt South of Campground 4



2-7-20 Deer Lake Overflowing



2-11-20 Deer Lake Outlet Screen



2-11-20 Mudslide at Deer Lake



2-11-20 Beaver-Watson Lake Inlet



2-10-20 Camp Wooten Nurse's Cabin



2-10-20 Camp Wooten Boy's Restroom



2-20-20 Campground 9



2-20-20 Draw that blew out into Campground 9



2-10-20 Little Tucannon River



3-10-20 Mudslide south of Little Tucannon River



3-10-20 Cow Canyon Blew out



3-10-20 Cow Camp Bridge



3-10-20 Rock Slide south of Cow Camp



3-10-20 Biggest Rock Slide (~25 feet deep) south of Cow Camp



3-10-20 Mudslide just north of Campground 10

TO PRESERVE,
 PROTECT AND
 PERPETUATE FISH,
 WILDLIFE AND
 ECOSYSTEMS WHILE
 PROVIDING
 SUSTAINABLE FISH
 AND WILDLIFE
 RECREATIONAL AND
 COMMERCIAL
 OPPORTUNITIES.

Floodplain Management Plan

Due to the recent flood damage to Deer Lake we have changed our upcoming project from Spring Lake to Deer Lake. WDFW has hired Geo Engineers to do the design work for Deer Lake and they are tentatively planning a site visit for the first part of April.

We are also hoping to move forward with the Geotech work on Beaver & Watson lakes at the same time to determine the availability of springs and groundwater to feed the lakes and potentially get away from the surface water diversions from the river.

Weed Spraying

WDFW received the RMEF grant again this year to continue treating noxious weeds with the helicopter. The funds will be used to spray 265 acres on the Wooten Wildlife Area this spring to continue to try to control the yellow starthistle infestation.

An application was submitted for a WSDA grant to spray more area outside of the elk fence. No word yet on the success of that application.

Large Wood Projects

After the recent flood event, Dave Karl is going to hold off on his large wood project for this summer. The river behind Rainbow Lake where the project was planned has changed significantly and the project will need to be redesigned. They will proceed with constructing the access roads and staging areas this summer so they can begin having materials delivered.

This flood was the first really high flows that have been seen since the large wood projects were started and things moved more than anticipated in places.

Bighorn Sheep Update

Current population size is 19 sheep, with 6 lambs surviving out of the 7 born last spring. However, 3 ewes have been lost to mountain lions in the last 6 months.

Wolf Update

There are currently 4 wolf packs in SE Washington. The Touchet (9 members), Tucannon (3 members), Grouse Flats (3 members), and Butte Creek (4 members). The Grouse Flats pack split up after the lethal removal of the breeding female last summer.

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The W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area consists of 16,481 acres in the foothills of the Blue Mountains. The main valley contains the Tucannon River, along which are located 8 man-made lakes which were constructed in the 1950s. The lakes are stocked with hatchery raised rainbow trout for a put-and-take fishery. There are 11 campgrounds located on the Wildlife Area.

The area was historically a major big game wintering location and lies adjacent to National Forest lands. The bulk of the land purchases occurred from 1941-1944. The elk fence was constructed in the 1960s.

Current management objectives and problems are similar to past goals and problems which include providing maximum winter-range forage conditions while meeting recreational use demands. At the present time there is a harvest season of some type taking place 12 months of the year within the boundaries of the wildlife area.

