

WATERFOWL ADVISORY GROUP

May 3, 2003

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

See attached attendance list.

1. Organization, purpose, goals, and logistics

Don Kraege provided background on organization of the Waterfowl Advisory Group (WAG), interaction with the Migratory Waterfowl Art Committee (MWAC).

Member Discussion: The MWAC reviews expenditures and the WAG will review projects and prioritize them prior to funding; WAG will also review other waterfowl management activities such as hunting seasons etc.

2. Review of 2003-05 Migratory Bird Stamp project proposals and WDFW preliminary rankings

Don Kraege provided background on duck stamp expenditures and projects; criteria for project prioritization within WDFW.

Member Discussion: Other criteria should include:

- geographic areas and mitigation of specific habitat losses e.g. Skagit focus on salmon and the need to mitigate waterfowl losses elsewhere;
- proximity to other projects;
- the threat of no action;
- should look at change in focus in eastern Washington to include wintering area (food plots);
- benefits to other species, should not be too significant an impact on scoring; remember that Art sales are not necessarily funded by hunters so could go to watchable activities;
- hunter access more explicit in scoring.

Evaluation of Projects

Capital Projects Discussion:

- Lake Creek Restoration - rated very high by members of the committee and recommended for funding
- Desert Lake Diking/Excavation - positive and supportive discussion, questions about retention of trout fishery, spoils piles will be reseeded, mixture should include shrub-steppe species; generally recommended for funding

- Sunnyside Circle Pivot – planting of corn for waterfowl with some left for winter, will be in the reserve, but remainder of area is open for hunting; supported by group
- Intalco Nest Islands – drain small ponds and develop nesting islands, primary beneficiary will be Canada geese; also supports wintering birds and hunter access; concern that goose populations doing well and don't need additional help; others said that islands should also produce ducks; questions about where the geese go and how many are subject; agree with WDFW ranking
- Intalco Water Control – replacement of pond control structure; WAG discussion minimal and seemed to agree with WDFW ranking
- Lake Terrell Farming and Winter Food Plot– need funding to continue project; concern about short stopping birds with feed in north Puget Sound;
- Tennant Lake Water Control – to manipulate water level with berm and structure to manage weeds and flood corn field
- Lake Terrell Blinds – refurbish pit blinds; questions about charging hunters fee to cover cost of maintaining blinds; would need legislative authority; who designed blinds, some hunters feel that blinds need additional cover or face wrong direction; concern that hunting blinds not as high a priority as production or wintering areas; in general agreement that WDFW rankings are accurate
- Tennant Lake – Silver Creek Acquisition – purchase in-holding so can flood currently managed portion of Tennant Lake; in general agreement that WDFW rankings are accurate
- Skagit WA Farmed Island Water Control – impoundment; ranked low by WDFW (below cut line) because contingent on feasibility study already funded but not completed; members suggested not approving projects below the funding level, recognizing that they can be resubmitted and then compete with new projects
- Spencer Island Water Control – impoundment, ranked low because some consideration for selling this property and purchasing other property that could be used elsewhere; discussion about who might be interested in purchase; this one was recommended to be removed from the list
- Stillwater Pond Excavation – ranked poorly and recommended for removal from list by WDFW
- Samish Unit Restoration – impoundment; question about phasing or separating the projects, or if the Welts piece goes to estuary, perhaps seek salmon money; still need some alternate funding to influence use of the property and provide hunting access; support for funding
- Cathlamet – Steamboat Slough – impoundment; ranked low by WDFW because of ownership concern; many members of WAG suggested purchase of the property rather than current private land wetland enhancement, so left on the list even though its below the cut list
- Lower Dungeness Acquisition – current acquisitions would be expanded and priority would be for areas where public hunting would be available; questions about proximity to houses, potential for public hunting might be limited; suggest identifying a parcel for acquisition with specific goals, and

resubmitting in two years; MOTION TO STRIKE THIS ONE FROM THE LIST AND WAS VOTED ON AND APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE

- Willapa River Acquisition/Easement – also restoration; questions about cost share money; supported by WAG
- Bell Creek Water Control – impoundment; supported by group
- Chehalis WA Acquisition – acquisition; supported by WAG
- Naselle Acquisition & Restoration – supported by WAG
- Chehalis Private Lands Water Control – impoundments; supported by WAG

Operating Project Discussion:

In the interest of time and because funding available for all projects, the discussion was focused on projects with lower support; concern expressed that waterfowl might be short-stopped with food plots; overall the list of projects was supported by WAG.

3. **Brainstorm of Public Access:**

Subject introduced by Dave Brittell; some felt that Feel Free to Hunt is public hunting and Hunt by Permission is not; information should be published by WDFW; too hard to find landowners enrolled in Hunt by Permission; restrictions could be made for “quality” opportunity; although would be OK if no hunting with measurable public gain e.g. waterfowl breeding area might be good to fund even if no hunting; concern also expressed about conflicts with other users (e.g. kayaks); suggested a program that allotted hunter access on private properties, accepted the liability, and provided enforcement; others reminded group of abuses by hunters and the need for self enforcement as well as increased WDFW enforcement; other activities should not be allowed on WDFW property that conflict with wildlife activities; state funded programs should require Feel Free to Hunt or better oversight by WDFW (duplicate slips so agency knows whether access is granted by landowner).

4. **Next Meeting and Agenda Items:**

WAG selected June 28th; suggested Ellensburg or Cle Elum.

Tentative Agenda:

- Election of Chair
- Hunting season regulations
- Pheasant releases on WDFW waterfowl hunting areas
- Quality waterfowl hunting areas
- Define “Public Access” for projects that receive Migratory Bird Stamp funding
- Open discussion
- Set future meeting dates and identify discussion topics

Future Potential Agenda Items:

- Advocacy for waterfowl management and hunting
- Watchable wildlife and enforcement of vehicle stickers on Wildlife Areas

Notes: Send info. on how seasons are developed; past hunter opinion survey results regarding quality waterfowl hunting; background info. on "public access"; provide name cards at next meeting.

WATERFOWL ADVISORY GROUP
Attendance List – May 3, 2003

John	Bjorkman	206-370-8311
Larry	Boose	509-882-1870
Chuck	Bratton	425-836-1106
Chris	Dorow	
Ralph	Engle	509-927-7631
Scott	Fink	509-624-2874
Oscar	Graham	360-766-4441
Steve	Herman	360-943-5751
Chris	Hyland	509-529-9569
Fred	LeVering	360-482-4984
Mike	Meseberg	
Dick	Nason	509-886-4385
Dick	Price	509-762-9027
Pat	Shearer	206-579-4483
Craig	Sherwood	360-604-8177
Dave	Sievers	360-289-4316
Fred	Slyfield	509-968-3855
Corky	Smith	360-736-6609
Others in attendance		
Dennis	Beich WDFW Reg. 2 Director	509-754-4624
Dave	Brittell WDFW Wildlife Pgm. Asst. Dir.	360-902-2504
Steve	Donovan DU Vancouver	360-885-2011
Ron	Friesz WDFW Waterfowl Specialist	509-754-4624 x37
Don	Kraege WDFW Waterfowl Section Mgr.	360-902-2522
Anita	McMillan WDFW Reg. 6 Dist. Biol.	
Thomas	Reed WDFW Lk. Terrell W.A.	360-384-4723
Bob	Swartz MWAC Chairman	425-483-8376
Jim	Tabor WDFW Reg. 2 Dist. Biol.	
Bob	Trost USFWS Pacific Flyway Rep.	503-231-6162
Johnny	Walker MWAC	360-794-7615
Dave	Ware WDFW Game Div. Mgr.	