

# Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area

## Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Charter

Updated April 29, 2014

### Introduction

Swanson Lakes is one of 33 wildlife areas (WLA) owned and/or managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Each of these areas is guided by a Wildlife Area Management Plan. Starting with Swanson Lakes, and continuing over the next 10 years, these plans will be revised to reflect current conditions and updated objectives to support the agency's mission: *To preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.*

The plans will be developed with input from the public and interested stakeholders, including a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC). This charter includes the purpose and responsibilities of the Swanson Lakes WAAC, and agency staff in the development of the Wildlife Area Management Plan.

### Purpose

The purpose of the advisory committee is to provide input for the development of the new Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Management Plan including Swanson Lakes, Revere and Reardan Audubon Lake WLA units.

### Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Membership

WAAC members represent a range of interested stakeholder groups who are impacted or have an interest in activities on the wildlife area including birding, wildlife, conservation, land management, local government, agri-business and other interests. WAAC members:

- Represent a group or organization affected or impacted, by and/or interested in wildlife area planning and management issues;
- Are committed to sharing information and bringing to the committee feedback from their respective constituents; and
- Are interested and committed to working collaboratively; and
- Understand and are comfortable in role of serving in an advisory capacity.

A roster of current members is attached.

### WAAC Role & Responsibilities

The role of the advisory committee is to provide public and other stakeholders' perspectives in WDFW wildlife area planning and management activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Review information, discuss issues with staff and other committee members, and provide input during the development of the wildlife area plan
- Serve as spokespersons for respective interest groups, reporting back to agency staff and the committee about the interests and concerns of the larger stakeholder group
- 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 wildlife area planning and management activities
- Identify issues of concern
- Be able to communicate about agency goals and wildlife area activities outside of WAAC meetings
- Act in an advisory capacity, providing input to staff that will be considered in the department'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 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Wildlife Area (WLA) Planning Team consists of staff from WDFW headquarters in Olympia, the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area and from the regional office in Spokane. This includes planners; wildlife, fish and habitat biologists, and GIS/mapping staff. The role of WDFW staff relative to the advisory committee is to facilitate effective WAAC input in wildlife area planning and management activities. WDFW will develop the new Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Management Plan, and will seek the committee's advice and guidance about plan objectives, proposed actions and planned management activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Develop productive agendas that clearly outline the desired outcomes of each meeting
- Facilitate effective meetings and dialogue with advisory committee members
- Develop materials and work products for WAAC review
- Distribute materials 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 committee 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 committee discussion. However, this can be supplemented and enhanced with input from other members of the public and interested parties. WAAC meetings open to the public and input will be encouraged. Unless the number and duration of public comments limits WAAC members' opportunity for discussion, public comment will be accepted at any time during WAAC meetings. 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 project 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 group will have more impact 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 effort will be led by three individuals, who will work with a regional team of biologists, scientists and planners who are located in Eastern Washington and Olympia. The plan will be approved by the Lands Division Manager, Clay Sprague, and, ultimately, by WDFW Director, Phil Anderson. Along the way, the regional team will assist the project leads with development of technical components and recommendations. The sequence of plan development and review will be as follows:

- WDFW WLA Planning Team develops plan objectives

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

### Meeting Schedule

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

- The first meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2014.
- The second meeting is expected to be held in the summer of 2014, 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 to the draft have been incorporated into a final plan, and prior to this plan being adopted by the department.

### WLA Planning Team Points of Contact

The following staff will lead the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Management Plan. Members are encouraged to contact staff at any time with questions or comments.

Staff	Role	Contact Info
Juli Anderson	Wildlife Area Manager	Juli.anderson@dfw.wa.gov (509) 636-2344
Lauri Vigue	Swanson Lakes WLA Plan Project Manager	Lauri.vigue@dfw.wa.gov (360) 902-2549
Melinda Posner	Wildlife Area Planning Manager and Outreach Lead	Melinda.posner@dfw.wa.gov (360) 902-2365