



CHILIWIST WILDLIFE AREA 2009 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



**Abandoned homestead on Cook Mountain Rd
Photo by Justin Haug**

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Chiliwist Wildlife Area Management Plan http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/ that provides management direction for the Chiliwist Wildlife Area (CWA), a part of the Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Area Complex, located about 1 mile southwest of Mallot in Okanogan County. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated annually as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develops, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan

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update also includes 2008 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2009.

Updates/Changes

The western gray squirrel, a state-listed endangered species, was confirmed by WDFW biologist Jeff Heinlen, via DNA analysis of hairs gathered using hair snag traps on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area.

An assistant wildlife area manager was hired in July to help with day-to-day activities.

Two fires occurred on the wildlife area in 2008; the Malott fire affected areas near Chiliwist Butte on the north end of the wildlife area, and the Rattlesnake fire affected areas near Rattlesnake Point on the south end of the Chiliwist. The fires will result in positive habitat changes over time. The fire suppression efforts will require significant attention such as reseeded, invasive plant monitoring, and erosion issues. See the Appendix 1 for more information.

New Issues

The wildlife area has until 2009 to use their water right; otherwise it will need to be placed in a trust. A sharecropper was located to begin using the water right. Flood irrigation was done on one field in October 2008 and irrigation using wheel lines will begin in 2009.

During the Okanogan County Coordinated Weed Management Area (CWMA) meeting, we discussed the possibility of changing the DNR fire suppression strategy. These changes are very important in the management of the Chiliwist because of the time and cost of post-fire restoration efforts on habitat, which should not have been damaged due to fire suppression efforts.

Both the agricultural lease and pasture permit on the Chiliwist have changed. The agriculture lease was transferred from one individual to another using the same lease with minimal changes. WDFW staff has worked extensively to improve the irrigation system, specifically the wheel lines (seals were replaced), motors fixed, and lines straightened. It is important that the water right be used on the Chiliwist fields since it has not been used since 2004, and there is a 5 year limit of non-use after which the right may be subject to forfeiture.



Post 1999 Chiliwist fire succession. Dead bitterbrush is evident, but young bitterbrush shrubs are growing. (Photo: D. Swedberg 2006)

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Two volunteers assisted WDFW staff in the repairs of two wheel lines used in irrigating the alfalfa fields as part of the agriculture lease.

All fire lines (7 miles and 15 acres) and damaged areas within the Chiliwist Wildlife Area as a result of DNR fire suppression efforts during the Malott and Rattlesnake Butte fires were recorded via GPS.

Treated known infestations of scotch thistle and Dalmatian toadflax on the Chiliwist WLA, including pulling known puncturevine from access areas.

Reseeded over 3 miles of dozer lines put in to fight the Malott and Rattlesnake fires. WDFW staff was able to reseed all dozer lines on Rattlesnake Butte and Taylor Canyon. Approximately 5 miles of dozer lines still need reseeding this spring at Chiliwist Butte.

Status Report of 2008 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2009.

2008 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2009 Related Activity/ Comments
Meet requirements of Federal Aid contract	Completed	
Renew grazing leases and agricultural leases expiring on or before December 31, 2008	Completed. Agricultural lease transferred; still need signatures for grazing lease.	Fences need to be repaired, replaced or removed for compliance of our grazing lease
Complete Fire Regime Condition Classification (FRCC) mapping	Not completed	Inadequate time
Locate a sharecropper to farm the irrigated agricultural fields	Completed	
Survey and/or mark/sign a minimum of 3 miles of CWA boundary	Not completed	No funding available
Rebuild and repair a minimum of 3 miles of fence	Not completed – repaired 0.1 miles of fence.	Funding has not been made available; repairs must be made this spring

2008 Performance Measure (continued)	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2009 Related Activity/ Comments
Work with private, county, state and federal land managers to promote use of prescribed fire, in a coordinated effort on all lands, to improve wildlife habitat, i.e., North Central Washington Prescribed Fire Council	Completed	Communication on the importance of prescribed burning will continue in 2009.
Develop protocol and procedures to facilitate implementation of prescribed burns	Completed	
Complete pumping vault installation	Not completed	
Build and install reader boards at five entrances to the CWA	Completed	
Locate by gridding and map, with GPS and GIS, all class B designate weed, e.g., Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed and other weed infestations on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area, such that a layer depicting a map of each weed species is included in the CWA GIS project	Partially completed	This is a multi-year project as weed infestations are discovered and eliminated.
Grid for weeds on 640 acres minimum	Not completed	Will continue to grid for, GPS and map weed infestations
Complete and/or review and update plans including WA plan, weed plan, and fire management plan	Completed	
Complete performance evaluations	Completed	
Apply for at least one grant or other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement funding	Not completed	

New Strategies



Chukar on Chiliwist Butte
Photo by Justin Haug

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species presence, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

Goal I: Healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations and habitats

Objective 2: Protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

Strategy: To avert the potential of loosing the Chiliwist irrigation water right one field was flood irrigated in October. Additionally a sharecropper has been located and irrigation will be restored to the fields in 2009.

2009 Performance Measures

2009 performance measures for the Chiliwist Wildlife Area are listed below.

Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Update reader boards with new signage and postings
- 2) Complete the reseeding of approximately 5 miles of dozer lines
- 3) Complete installation of 3 miles of boundary fence (high priority)
- 4) Rebuild and repair a minimum of 3 miles of fence (high priority)
- 5) Survey for weeds on 640 acres minimum
- 6) Meet requirements of Federal Aid contract by gridding and mapping using GPS and GIS, all class B designate weed, e.g., Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed and other weed infestations on the CWA, such that a layer depicting a map of each weed species is included in the Chiliwist Wildlife Area GIS project.

- 7) Renew grazing leases and agricultural leases expiring on or before December 31, 2009
- 8) Complete Fire Regime Condition Classification (FRCC) mapping
- 9) Survey and/or mark/sign a minimum of 3 miles of CWA boundary
- 10) Review and update plans including WA plan, weed plan, and fire management plan
- 11) Complete performance evaluations
- 12) Complete layers on CWA GIS project including fence, fence features, artificial nest structures, roads, culverts, campsites, toilets, signs, reader boards, power poles.
- 13) Visit all known Dalmatian toadflax and Russian knapweed sites at least twice to monitor and initiate appropriate treatment.
- 14) Use Okanogan County Jail Trustees for weed control and fence maintenance efforts
- 15) Work with private, county, state and federal land managers to promote use of prescribed fire, in a coordinated effort on all lands, to improve wildlife habitat, i.e., North Central Washington Prescribed Fire Council
- 16) Apply for at least one grant or other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement funding

Citizens Advisory Group Input

The East Okanogan County Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on February 26, 2009 to review Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island, Chiliwist and Scotch Creek Management Plans, management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. The attendance was disappointingly low with only five people attending in addition to four WDFW representatives. Those in attendance included representatives from The Back Country Horsemen, Oroville Sports Club, Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District, and two private citizens interested in the management of the Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Areas.

There were no new input/issues provided or raised at the meeting. There were no other comments/issues received specific to the CWA.

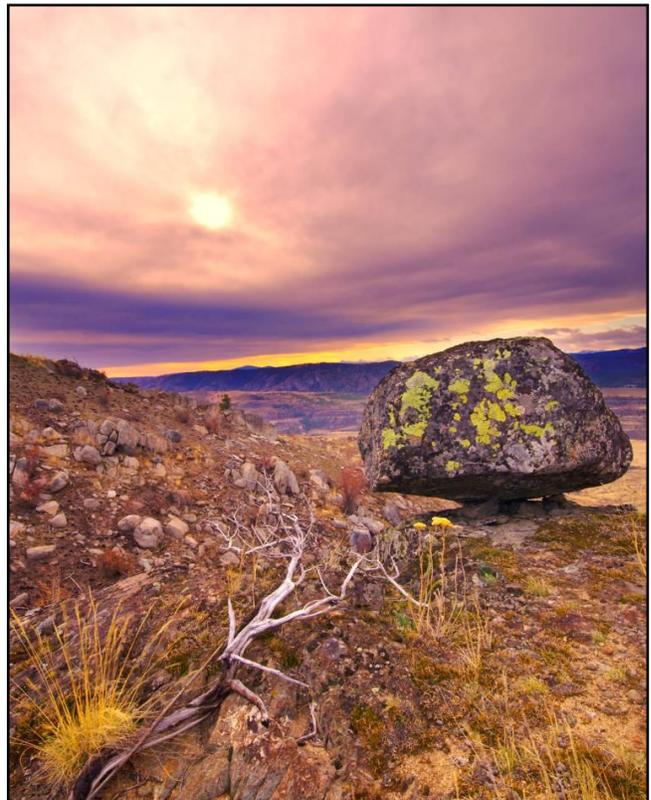
Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/

Contacts:

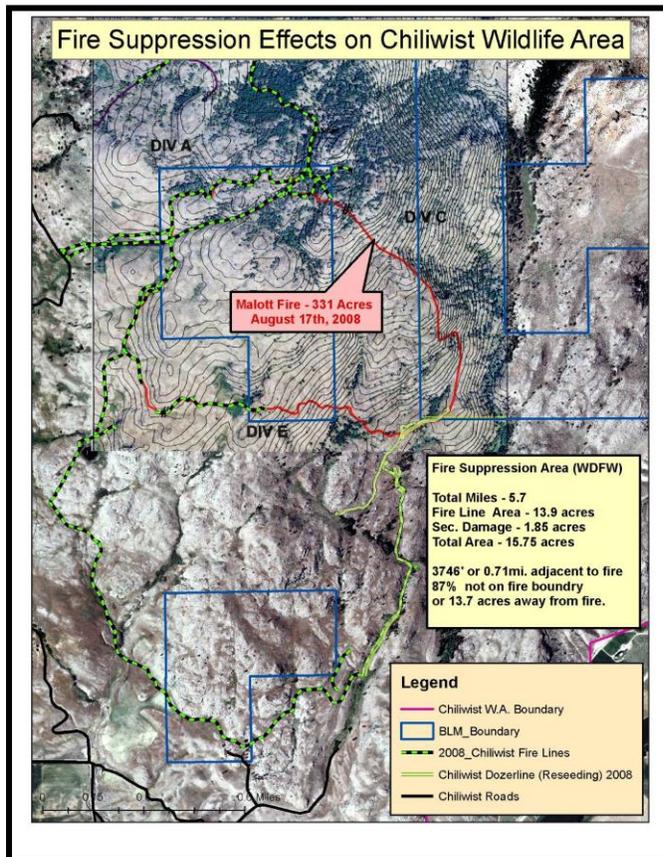
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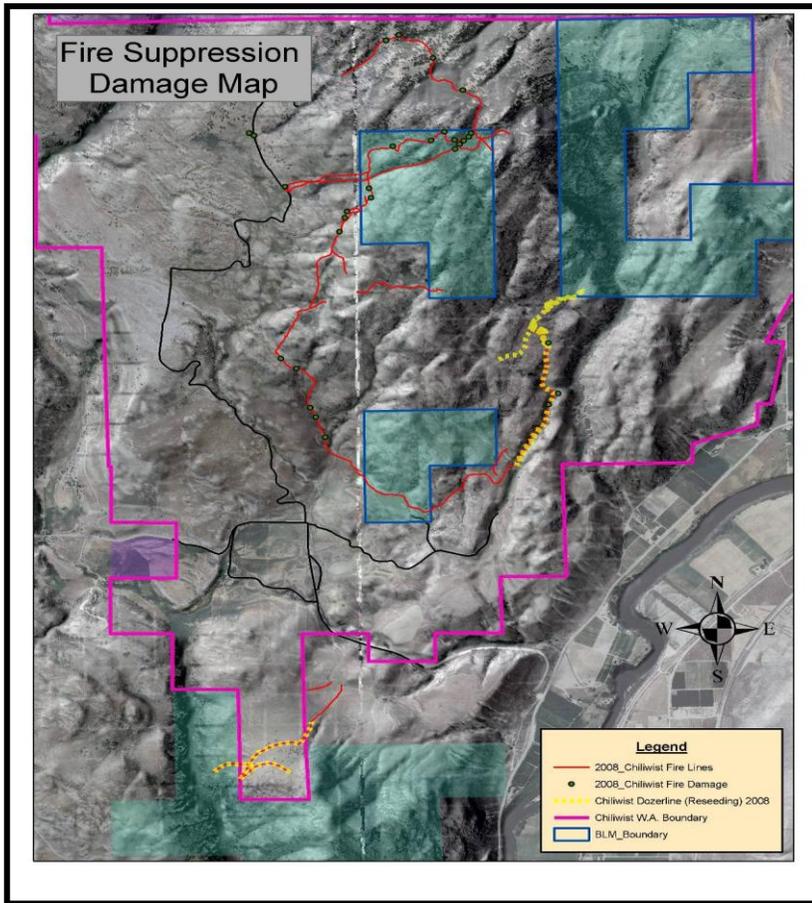


Appendix 1

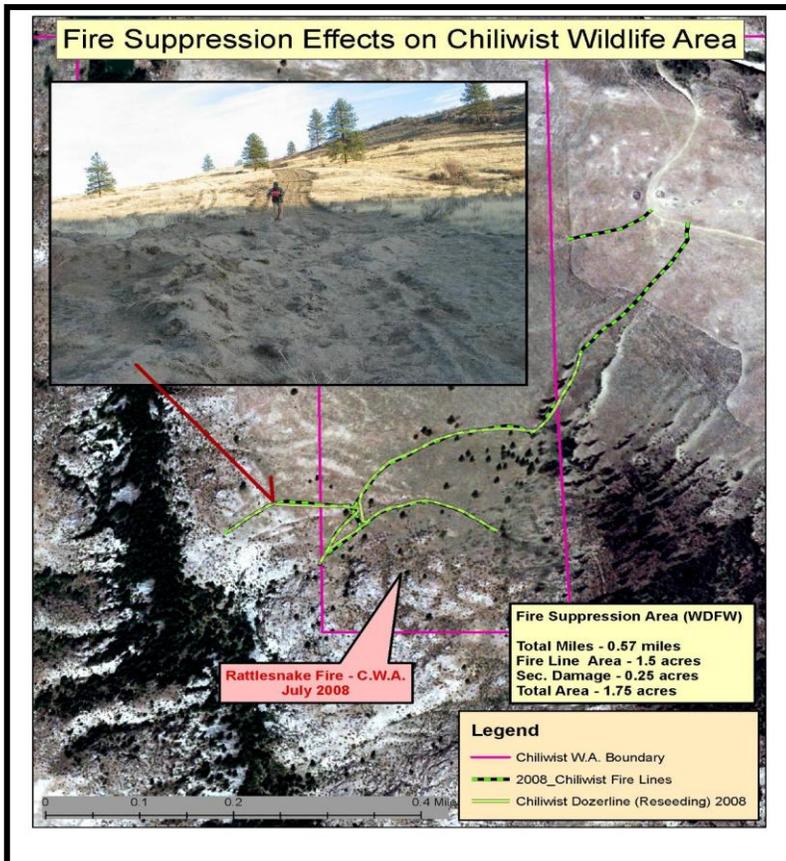
In 2008 two wildfires occurred on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area, the Rattlesnake fire and the Malott fire. In both cases the fire suppression organization was requested to minimize the use of dozer lines and use existing roads as anchor and holding points. The following maps and photos show the aftermath of the dozer lines and damage to plant communities and creation of conditions that enhance invasion of noxious weeds.

The first graphic is of the Chiliwist Butte fire. Please note that the dozer line at the greatest southern apex is over a mile from the fire. Approximately 2.5 miles or eighty-seven (87) percent of the dozer lines built in conjunction with this fire were NOT adjacent or close to the fire. Unnecessary ground disturbance requires rehabilitation in terms of planting vegetation, preferably native species, to try to compete with the weeds that will become established. Other restorative actions that are needed, if equipment and personnel are available include: 1) installing water bars to minimize erosion of dozer lines, and 2) restore the soil and sod back to alignment with the adjacent undisturbed ground. Note that the total area unnecessarily disturbed is nearly 14 acres. In this photo there is another fire line at the base of the burned area in the background. Again this damaged area needed reseeding to reduce noxious weed establishment as well as water bars and realigning the soil and sod with the adjacent soil and sod.

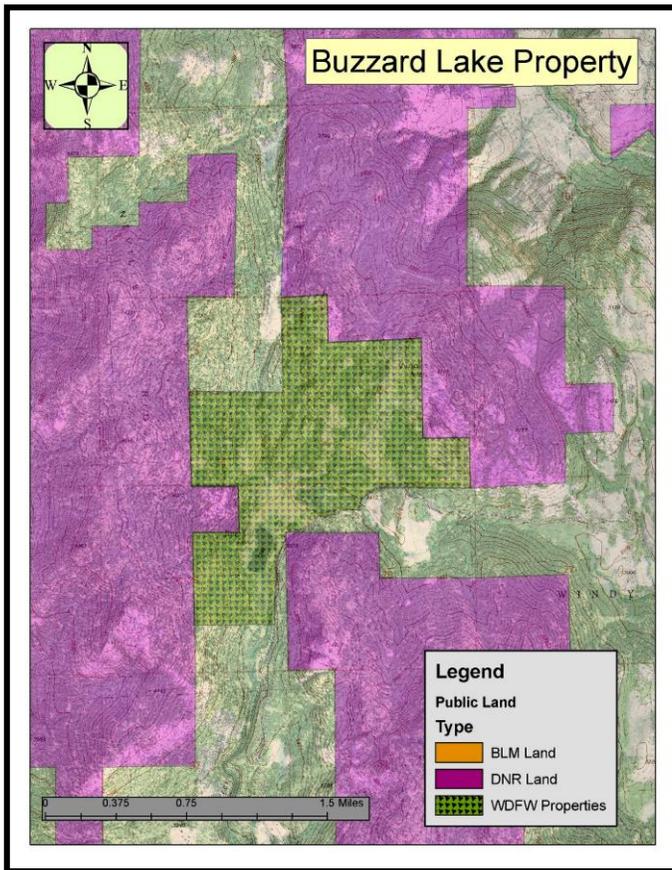




This graphic shows both areas of the two fires on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area along with dozer lines and dozer lines that were reseeded.



This graphic shows the dozer lines made on the Rattlesnake Fire as well as a photo



The following graphic is a map of the recently acquired 815-acre Buzzard Lake property located approximately 7.5 miles north of the Chiliwist Wildlife Area.