



CHILIWIST WILDLIFE AREA 2012 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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 Wildlife Area Complex, located about 1 mile southwest of Malott 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 every two years 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 update also includes 2010-11 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2012-13.



*Iris near Chiliwist Butte
Photo by Justin Haug*

Updates/Changes

A new agricultural lessee and grazing permittee were welcomed to the Chiliwist Wildlife Area in 2011. The agricultural lease was awarded for ten years. The deviation from the usual lease arrangement of five years was necessary due to the cost of improvements and renovation necessary to upgrade the irrigation infrastructure. Renovation is needed to efficiently use WDFW’s water right as well as improve irrigation of fields. The cost of irrigation system restoration plus the cost of re-establishing hay fields was not cost effective for the permittee for a time period less than 10 years. As part of the irrigation system improvement the lessee paid for and installed a center pivot irrigation system on the NE alfalfa fields to irrigate approximately 35+ acres.

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The new grazing permittee has also begun working on improvements throughout the permitted range including fence repairs, removing unneeded fence and rolling up old barbed wire, and staging cattle guards to be installed on Chiliwist Butte Road.

New Issues

Access through the private in-holding on the Chiliwist WA has been stopped by landowner of a 5-acre in-holding, thus effectively blocking access to the irrigated fields south of Chiliwist Creek for the new sharecropper and WDFW personnel. A fence was constructed on the in-holding property boundary to better delineate property lines. An alternate access is needed to the fields on the south side of Chiliwist Creek. Efforts are ongoing to acquire access to the south side of Chiliwist Creek.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Treated known infestations of Scotch thistle. Treatment involved clipping and bagging seed heads in addition to digging next year’s rosettes. Treated puncturevine in areas; all known sites showed reduced abundance. Populations of diffuse knapweed beetles seemed up this year with heavy use in some areas and signs of damage throughout the wildlife area.

Grant funding for a watering improvement and spring developments has been secured for the Chiliwist WA and is currently awaiting allocation. These improvements will contribute significantly to better pasture utilization.



Status Report of 2010-11 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 2012-13.

2010-11 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012 -13 Related Activity/ Comments
Meet requirements of Federal Aid contract	Completed	All requirements met
Renew grazing permits and agricultural leases expiring on or before December 31, 2009	Completed	Both documents have been finalized. No renewal needed until 2015
Complete Fire Regime Condition Classification (FRCC) mapping	Not completed	Inadequate time
Locate a sharecropper to farm the irrigated agricultural fields	Completed	Finalized – lease expires in 2020
Survey and/or mark/sign a minimum of 3 miles of CWA boundary	Partially Completed	T-posts placed at every survey marker. Signs still needed on posts.
Rebuild and repair a minimum of 3 miles of fence	Not Completed	Materials will be provided to sharecropper for major repairs and rebuilds.
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, Washington State Prescribed Fire Council	Completed	Ongoing communication on the importance of prescribed burning will continue in 2012-13.
Develop protocol and procedures to facilitate implementation of prescribed burns	In Progress	One person has been hired and another soon to be hired to develop and implement the prescribed burn program
Complete the reseeding of approximately 5 miles of dozer lines	Not completed	Will survey this spring/summer for weeds & re-seed disturbed areas
Update reader boards with new signage and postings	In Progress	New reader boards were constructed and installed. Signs need to be acquired and/or developed.
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	Ongoing - this is a multi-year project as weed infestations are discovered and eliminated. GIS layers constantly updated. Scotch thistle infestations being reduced

2010-11 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012 Related Activity/ Comments
Survey for weeds on 640 acres minimum	Completed in so far as known areas of weed infestation were resurveyed. No additional acreage was surveyed.	As time allows will continue to survey and treat new infestations
Complete and/or review and update plans including WA plan, weed plan, and fire management plan	In Progress	Management plans will be updated this year and in 2014 to address new strategies/WDFW goals.
Complete performance evaluations	Completed	Will complete as required this year.
Apply for at least one grant or other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement funding	Completed	Applied for funding to develop watering sites; projects were approved and awaiting allocation.

Strategies

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. There were no new strategies identified during this reporting period.

These public comments from the Citizen Advisory Group are captured at the end of this document. Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

Access to Irrigated Field South of Chiliwist Creek

Efforts to develop and fund a crossing of Chiliwist Creek are of an urgent matter to facilitate access for the sharecropper to irrigate and farm the fields south of Chiliwist Creek. All options are being considered and reviewed, e.g., ford, bridge, bottomless culvert, culvert or purchased easement.



WesternMeadowlark

2012-13 Performance Measures

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: postings, alerts, maps, educational materials, etc.
- 2) Work with WDFW Engineers and sharecropper to complete irrigation renovations and improvements.
- 3) Install flume in Chiliwist Creek to determine flow throughout the year.
- 4) Remove old sheep fencing and barbed wire from the wildlife area.
- 5) Survey by gridding for weeds on minimum of 640 acres previously not surveyed
- 6) Meet requirements of Federal Aid contract
- 7) Re-survey by gridding and map, with GPS and GIS, all known Class B designate weeds, e.g., Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed and other weed infestations on the CWA, to develop map layers depicting locations and control actions for each weed species to include on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area GIS project.
- 8) Work with sharecropper and grazing permittee to assure improvements are made in timely manner.
- 9) Post boundary signs along recently surveyed portion of the 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 and power poles.
- 13) Visit all known Dalmatian toadflax, Scotch thistle, puncturevine, baby's-breath and Russian knapweed sites at least twice to monitor and initiate appropriate treatment. (See item No. 7)
- 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, Washington State 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 Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on January 25, 2012 to review Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island, Chiliwist and Scotch Creek Management Plans, management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues.

The following participants attended:

Name	Affiliation
Dale Swedberg	WDFW
Larry Hudson	OCNWCB
Greg Bennett	Okanogan County Fly Club
Russell Reed	Okanogan County Fly Club
Nathan Wehmeyer	BLM
Garry Schalla	Okanogan Land Trust
John Williams	Loomis Community Club
Kirsten Williams	Loomis Community Club
Trygve Culp	OVCBCH
Peggy Swanberg	OVCBCH
Dave Swanberg	OVCBCH
Rick Lind	Citizen
Matt Marsh	USFS
Dan Whitley	Gebbers Cattle Company
Clay Gebbers	Gebbers Cattle Company
Jerry Barnes	Citizen
Troy McCormick	WDFW
Jen Croft	Republic
Hugh Jensen	Tonasket
Justin Haug	WDFW

WDFW – Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
OCNWCB – Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board
BLM – Bureau of Land Management
OVCBCH – Okanogan Valley Chapter – Backcountry Horsemen
USFS – United States Forest Service

Comments/issues received specific to the CWA:

Issue 1: Old hog/woven wire near the Chiliwist Creek and surrounding fields make it difficult for people hunting with dogs. Solution: Sinlahekin staff will remove the hog wire this coming spring. The wire is a hold-over of past farming in the area; it provides no use to the agency or agricultural lessee.

Contacts:

Dale Swedberg
WDFW Ephrata Office
509.754.4624
Wildlife Area Manager
509.223.3358

Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

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

