



SCOTCH CREEK WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Management Plan (that provides management direction for the Scotch Creek, Mineral Hill, Pogue Mountain, Tunk Valley, Chesaw, and the new Ninemile Creek units 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 develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2007 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2008. For a complete copy of the 2006 management plan, go to:

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

Updates/Changes

- The biggest change to the Scotch Creek Wildlife Areas in 2007 occurred when the DFW closed on the purchase of approximately 3,300 acres in the north county, known as the Eder ranch. This purchase represents phase one of a two-phase acquisition. The Department of Fish and Wildlife has an option to purchase approximately 3,000 acres of the remaining ranch if funding can be secured. Phase two should close by July 1, 2008 and will contain two life estates. One for the sellers, Mr. and Mrs. Eder, and another for their two daughters. The life estates total approximately 700 acres and include all the agricultural fields and irrigation equipment, 5 residences, and many outbuildings.
- Management of the “Ninemile Creek Wildlife Area” has been added to the Scotch Creek complex, due to the BPA funding source for purchase.

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- Budget reductions from BPA again for FY 2008 reduced the Chesaw Maintenance Mechanic position by 1 month, and eliminated all funding for the WCC crew. However future funding from BPA is looking better. With the purchase of the Eder ranch, there is an anticipated increase in O&M funding for this new area in 2008. In addition, DFW is in negotiations with BPA to restore some of the cuts experienced in 2007.

New Issues:

No new issues this reporting.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

- We successfully reseeded 105 acres of old Ag fields on Happy Hill to a mix of native grasses and forbs. This project was funded with a WHIP grant and requires a summer-long program to prepare the seedbed, and a fall dormant seeding in November. This included the area known as the green place, where a residence, two barns, and shop were removed by public auction.





- The 4-year old shrub planting at the Scotch Creek HQ is obviously stunted due to heavy deer browsing. In an attempt to protect the young plants and encourage vertical growth, we constructed a deer exclosure made of a new fabric. The polypropylene material is strong and virtually invisible from a distance. The first winter proved successful.



- Continued with the weed management plan. 2007 Weed Control Summary:

Wildlife Area Unit	Site Type	Weed Controlled	Acres Treated	Total Acres with Weed	Density
Scotch Creek WA	Field, agriculture	Other	25	25	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	Knapweed, diffuse	28	100	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	Kochia	4	25	Medium
Scotch Creek WA	Parking areas	General weeds	0.75	0.75	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Parking areas	General weeds	0.75	0.75	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	General weeds	10	10	Medium
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	General weeds	105	105	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Riparian	Other	0.25	3	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	General weeds	20	70	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	General weeds	23	23	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	White top- hoary cress	60	100	Medium
Scotch Creek WA	Field, fallow	General weeds	90	90	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Field, fallow	General weeds	90	90	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Field, fallow	General weeds	90	90	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Field, fallow	General weeds	90	90	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Upland	Toadflax, Dalmatian	<1	<1	Low
Scotch Creek WA	Riparian	Thistle, Canada	10	50	High
Scotch Creek	Upland	Thistle Canada	10	50	Med
Scotch Creek	Upland	General weeds	100	100	Low
Chesaw	Upland	Thistle musk	Unknown	150	Med
Scotch Creek	Upland	Knapweed Russian	125	400	High
Tunk Valley	Upland	Knapweed Russian	75	200	High
Scotch Creek	Upland	General Weeds	100	100	Low

- We completed the survey and fencing on the South boundary of the Scotch Creek unit. WDFW survey crews from Olympia surveyed the line and Scotch Creek staff replaced the badly deteriorated fence along the south boundary line of the new Boyce acquisition. Approximately 2 miles of new stock fence was built and nearly 4 miles, including interior drift fences was removed. We used a new tool, a hydraulic wire roller, designed and built by DFW to roll up the old and rusted wire. A much-improved condition now exists and will last for decades.



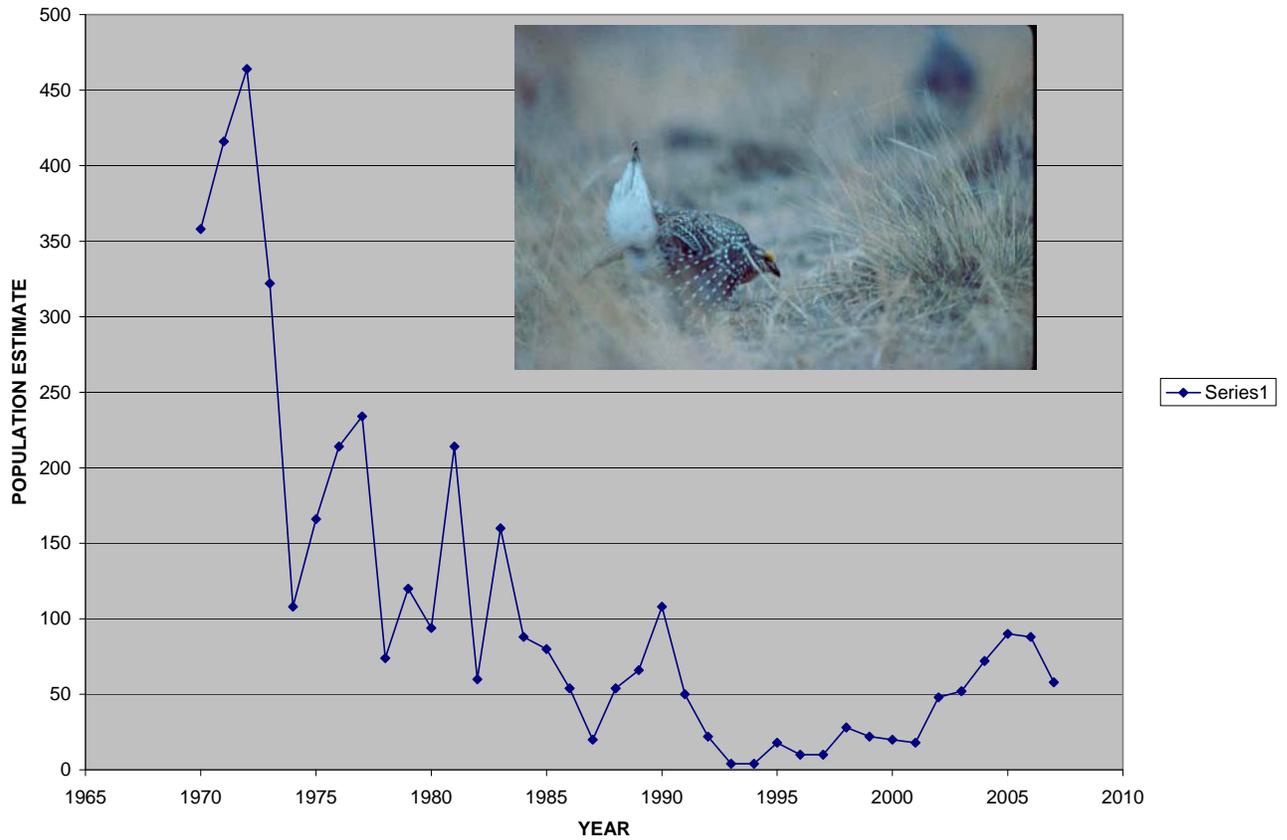
- Maintained all previous tree and shrub plantings (approx 100,000) by mowing and hand pulling weed competition, installing rodent guards on the base of new plants, fertilized, and planted 500 water birch transplants.
- We signed the entire boundary of the new Ninemile Creek property with “Hunt by access permit only” signs. Also located the corners of the life estate by GPS, and posted “No trespassing” signs around this 700 acre private in holding. A very successful “limited entry” deer hunt was completed on the unit in 2007.
- Sharp-tailed Grouse Lek counts.

Scotch Creek: 29 (three leks)

Tunk Valley: 45 (five leks)

Chesaw: 15 (one lek)

SCOTCH CREEK STG



I attribute the decline in 2007 to a very cold and wet June 2006. The timing couldn't have been worse, with many upland bird chicks just hatched. Hungarian partridge, pheasants, quail and other upland birds in the area declined in numbers as well.

- What was left of the Honey Lake barn was dismantled, and materials salvaged. The site was cleared of debris and seeded in the fall with native grasses.



Status Report of 2007 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 2007.

2007 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2008 Related Activity/ Comments
Shrub-steppe restoration. Summer fallow 80 acres and fall dormant seeding of native grasses and forbs on the Happy Hill, LLC acquisition on Scotch Creek. This is phase one of a WHIP grant received in 2007.	Accomplished 105 acres, which included the “Green place” buildings that were auctioned to the public in 2006.	Complete
Riparian restoration. Maintain over 100,000 trees and shrubs previously planted. Include 500 new Water Birch transplants where needed.	Completed. Not all of the 100,000 riparian plants need attention as many have successfully established.	Complete. 500 Water Birch have been ordered for 2008. We will fill in areas lacking this most important winter food source for Sharp-tails.
Deer exclosure fence. Install approximately 2 miles of deer fence to prevent browsing damage to new tree and shrub plants. Two existing plots will be fenced, one near the Scotch Creek HQ, and the other below the “corrals” along scotch Creek.	Completed the 4-acre site near the HQ with O&M funding. The other area planned was not completed. The WHIP grant received for this second project does include approval to use the new polypropylene material.	Completed ½ of the planned activities. No plans to include the “corrals” area in 2008 activities.
Continue with weed management plan. Plans for 2007 include 40 acres of White-top, 200 acres of Russian Knapweed, and 20 acres Canadian Thistle on Scotch Creek. 40 acres of Houndstounge and 125 acres of Musk Thistle on Chesaw. 10 acres of Russian Knapweed on Pogue Mountain and 40 acres on Tunk Valley.	See weed control summary above. All planned sites were accomplished, with additional areas treated.	Successful year in 2007, plans are similar for this year, see 2008 performance measures.
Restore proper hydraulic function to Scotch Creek below the HQ. Includes dredging a new meandering channel to mimic natural conditions, and a 2-year plan to eliminate the reed canary	The extensive process to acquire all permits required was completed in 2007. Due to site conditions in the late fall, when permits where in hand, construction was not started.	Construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2008. If the conditions allow, we will attempt to mow the reed canary grass for the entire summer, in preparations of Roundup spraying in

grass invasion and plant new riparian vegetation.		September.
Boundary fence repair and signing. Inspect and repair in early spring as much of the 60 miles boundary fence as feasible on all units. Install or replace wildlife area boundary signs as needed.	Completed approximately ½ of the planned repairs on Scotch Creek, Tunk Valley, Mineral Hill, and Pogue Mountain.	Pogue Mountain required more time than expected with lots of clean up needed from original tear out. Continuation of this activity in 2008 will be more difficult due to funding cuts (loss of the WCC crew, and 1-month seasonal help.

New 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 present 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.

No new strategies.

2008 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Shrub-steppe restoration. Summer fallow 95 acres and fall dormant seeding of native grasses and forbs on the Happy Hill, LLC acquisition on Scotch Creek. This is phase two of the WHIP grant received in 2006.
- 2) Riparian restoration. Maintain all previously planted trees and shrubs to insure a high survival rate. Include 500 new Water Birch transplants where needed.
- 3) Continue to survey and repair boundary fence on all units. Inspect and repair in early spring as much of the 70 miles boundary fence as feasible on all units. Install or replace wildlife area boundary signs as needed.
- 4) Make improvements to the irrigation pond/sediment trap. Place ecology blocks along the south shore to narrow the pond, and allow for more efficient dredging. Also pour small concrete slab around pump station for weed control, and install a fish ladder to allow in stream passage of brook trout.
- 5) Continue with weed management plan. Plans for 2008 include 40 acres of White-top, 200 acres of Russian Knapweed, and 20 acres Canadian Thistle on Scotch Creek. 40 acres of Houndstounge and 125 acres of Musk Thistle on Chesaw. 10 acres of Russian Knapweed on Pogue Mountain and 40 acres on Tunk Valley.
- 6) Restore proper hydraulic function to Scotch Creek below the HQ. Start the construction phase on a new meandering channel to mimic natural conditions, and a 2-year plan to eliminate the reed canary grass invasion.
- 7) Develop ½ acre irrigated shrub planting on the Boyce property. Utilize the existing irrigation system, branch off with a drip-irrigated plot, and install deer fence to protect young plants. This will be subject to funding (remaining O&M budget).
- 8) Apply for three RCO grants for 2009 funding. 1) Ninemile access development. 2) Coulee Creek trail system. 3) Pogue mountain pre-commercial thinning.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

No comments received from CAG.

Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

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

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