



SINLAHEKIN WILDLIFE AREA 2008 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Canadian Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly *Papilio canadensis*

Photo: D. Nunnallee

Land Management Summary

This is the 2008 annual report for calendar year 2007 and an update to the 2006 Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Management Plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/) that provides management direction for the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in Okanogan County Washington. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish

Inside

Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	2
New Issues	2
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	2
Status Report of 2007 Performance Measures	3
New Strategies	6
2008 Performance Measures	7
Citizens Advisory Group Input	7

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.

Updates/Changes

Work on two trails, Conner to Forde Lake Trail and Forde Lake to Blue Lake Trails, initiated in 2006 and funded (\$200,000) through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Non-highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) – Non-motorized Category Program grant was continued to near completion in 2007. The entire trail is about 7 miles in length, from the north side and around the east side of Conner lake



Okanogan Backcountry Horsemen trail crew

south to Forde Lake and continuing south crossing the Sinlahekin Valley Road near Sinlahekin Creek Campground and continuing southwesterly around the west side of Blue Lake, crossing the Sinlahekin Valley Road again to the east just south of Blue Lake and continuing southward along the east side of the valley and ending about a mile north of Fish Lake. Again volunteers from the Okanogan Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen worked 2 days. They covered nearly 4 miles of trail clearing brush and trees including about a mile of extremely heavy brush, trees and downed logs. Trail markers were installed, over 1/3 mile of ADA trail was constructed, 3 Kiosks were installed, an ADA toilet and parking were installed, an ADA fishing pier and viewing blind were installed and 5 other viewing blinds were installed. A few details remain to complete the projects. The Alpine WCC crew of four people out of Ellensburg spent 6 days on trail related work.

Work began on the Doheny Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project (WHIP) (\$11,250) from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) approved in 2005 for installing about a mile of fence to keep cattle out of a wetland area and planting water birch. The fence was completed with a majority of the water birch planted. The remaining trees will be planted in spring 2008.

One Central Washington University Geography student spent 4 weeks on an internship at the Sinlahekin. The intern continued to collect data, add to and refine the Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist GIS projects.



Justin Bush, 2007 CWU Geography Intern

New Issues

No new issues were identified.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

Using Okanogan County Jail Crews significant progress was made in locating and cutting and bagging hounds tongue.

The Sinlahekin Fuels Reduction, Reconfiguration and Fire Regime Restoration plan was completed.

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
Meet requirements of Federal Aid Contract	Completed	Ongoing
Renew grazing leases and agricultural leases expiring on or before December 31, 2006	Completed - One grazing permit was overlooked that expired in 2005	The permit paperwork was completed and submitted for signatures.
Complete Fire Regime Condition Classification (FRCC) mapping	Not Completed	Will continue to work on this as time permits
In coordination with Lands program staff, negotiate new agreement with DNR for use of the Highlands Fire Camp Site.	Not Completed	WDFW & DNR are in the process of negotiating a land trade. The Highlands Camp site is on the list for potential trade.
Prepare and implement a fuels treatment project in area logged winter of 2003-04 in preparation for coordinated fuels treatment and Rx burn with USFS	Discussions were held with USFS regarding use of portions of the SWA as part of their fuels treatment and logging which needs to be completed before an Rx burn can happen	Continue to work with USFS to facilitate getting their fuels treatment completed so Rx burn can take place ASAP
Survey and/or mark/sign a minimum of 10 miles of SWA boundary.	Not Completed	No funds available to survey boundary
Build, rebuild or repair a minimum of 10 miles of fence.	Completed	Maintain in 2008

Initiate and complete as much as possible the Connors Lake to Forde Lake and Forde Lake to Blue Lake trails development projects	Okanogan Chapter of The Backcountry Horsemen (BCH) spent 2 weekends clearing trail on approximately 4 miles of trail. Worked with Engineering Section on kiosk and viewing blind designs.	Continue to work with BCH to finish trail clearing. Continue to work with Engineering Section to complete trail projects.
Develop protocol and procedures to facilitate implementation of prescribed burns.	Completed	Update when necessary
Apply for at least one grant through FNAWS, Mule Deer Foundation for habitat assessment and enhancement work.	Completed	Assisted Jim Olson with WWRP grant application development and I presented the proposal to IAC Review Board. Proposal ranked #2
Complete installation of reader boards at all 7 entrances to the SWA.	Completed	Maintain in 2008
Map with GPS and GIS all weed infestations on the SWA, such that a layer depicting a map of each weed species is included in the SWA GIS project.	Many weed infestations were GPSed with data entered into GIS project to create maps	This effort will be an ongoing from year to year as new weed infestations are found.
Grid, GPS and map Dalmatian Toadflax, Russian knapweed, and other weeds	Ellensburg WCC crew that was used to grid for weeds was unavailable when gridding was optimal	Efforts will continue in 2008
Initiate and complete WHIP grant project for Doheny Basin riparian protection and Water birch planting to provide Sharp-tailed grouse winter forage	The project was not completed due to a thriving population of a state candidate butterfly species, Silver-bordered fritillary, was discovered at the site and the larval plant host, marsh violet, was found to be benefiting from grazing which reduced competition from Reed Canary grass.	The project was modified to accommodate concerns for the butterfly and larval host plants. However it was not completed, but will be completed in early 2008.
Complete and/or review and update plans including WA plan, weed plan, and fire management plan	Plans reviewed and updated, but not complete	Completion of plans will occur as time permits, e.g., species lists, weed mgmt plan
Complete performance evaluations	Completed	
Complete layers on SWA GIS	New layers were created by	This effort will continue again

project including Fence, Fence features, artificial nest structures, roads, culverts, campsites, toilets, signs, reader boards, power poles.	and many layers refined by 1 CWU intern during the summer of 2007	during the summer of 2008 if interns are available.
Visit all known Dalmatian Toadflax and Russian knapweed sites at least twice and initiate appropriate treatment.	Completed	Continue in 2008
Do Stewardship inspection of Greg and Carol James' Conservation Easement	Not Completed	Rescheduled to be completed in 2008 due to inadequate staffing
Initiate and complete Mule Deer Foundation grant for mule deer habitat enhancement	Not completed	Grant required a 1:1 dollar match. Not successful in finding a match for the grant. Grant extension was not granted.
Complete National Fire Management Plan grant from USFWS for Sinlahekin Fuels Management and Planning	Completed Fuels mgmt and treatment plan	Update as needed
Initiate and complete self guided tour project	A large part of the self guided tour has been completed but there is a lot left to do	Complete the project in 2008
Complete projects for which grants were awarded	WHIP and Mule Deer Foundation grants were not completed. The National Fire Plan grant was completed.	WHIP grant was not completed (See above). Unable to find matching funds for the Mule Deer Foundation grant. (See above)
Work with the WDFW Contracts Office to obtain a contract with Okanogan County jail to allow use of trustee work crews to cut and pull weeds and do other projects	Completed	Continue in 2008
Use Okanogan County Jail Trustees for weed control and fence maintenance efforts	They were used throughout the summer	They will continue to be used throughout 2008
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,	The North Central Washington Prescribed Fire Council Steering Committee met twice and continues to work towards accomplishing the Mission and Objectives	Work in this area will be continued.

i.e., North Central Washington Prescribed Fire Council	and Tasks set forth.	
Apply for grants and other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement funding	No grant applications were submitted	Continue effort in 2008

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.

Issues identified in italics were provided by the Citizens Advisory Group. These public comments 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.

No new strategies were or have been identified.

2008 Performance Measures

2008 performance measures for the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Complete Connor to Forde Lake trail
- 2) Complete Forde Lake to south Blue Lake trail
- 3) Complete Doheny WHIP project
- 4) Rebuild and repair a minimum of 5 miles of fence
- 5) Grid for weeds on 640 acres minimum
- 6) Meet requirements of Federal Aid contract
- 7) Renew grazing leases and agricultural leases expiring on or before December 31, 2008
- 8) Prepare and implement a fuels treatment project in area logged winter of 2003-04 in preparation for coordinated fuels treatment and Rx burn with USFS
- 9) Complete Fire Regime Condition Classification (FRCC) mapping
- 10) Survey and/or mark/sign a minimum of 10 miles of SWA boundary
- 11) Locate by gridding (see #6) and map, with GPS and GIS, all class B designate weed, e.g., Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed and other weed infestations on the SWA, such that a layer depicting a map of each weed species is included in the SWA GIS project
- 12) Complete and/or review and update plans including WA plan, weed plan, and fire management plan
- 13) Complete performance evaluations
- 14) Complete layers on SWA GIS project including Fence, Fence features, artificial nest structures, roads, culverts, campsites, toilets, signs, reader boards, power poles.

- 15) Visit all known Dalmatian Toadflax and Russian knapweed sites at least twice to monitor and initiate appropriate treatment.
- 16) Do Stewardship inspection of Greg and Carol James' Conservation Easement
- 17) Complete self-guided tour project
- 18) Use Okanogan County Jail Trustees for weed control and fence maintenance efforts
- 19) 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
- 20) Apply for at least one grant or other funding opportunities consistent with planned priorities to supplement funding

Citizens Advisory Group Input

An East Okanogan County Citizens Advisory Group meeting was held on March 13, 2008 to review Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Management Plans and management progress and address any new issues or input on existing issues. Those in attendance included representatives from the Back Country Horsemen, Oroville Sportsmen's Club, Okanogan Wildlife Council, Okanogan Cattlemen's Association, and a private citizen interested in the management of the Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Areas.

The following new input/issues were addressed at the meeting.

No new input or issues were identified.

Other comments/issues received that apply to all wildlife areas:

No other comments/issues were received that apply to all wildlife areas.

Want to see the full plan?

Go to –

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

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