

OLYMPIC/WILLIPA HILLS WILDLIFE AREA

2018-2019 Wildlife Area Management Plan Update



Figure 1: A herd of elk keeps watch

This document highlights accomplishments related to goals and objectives identified within the [Olympic-Willapa Hills Wildlife Area Management Plan](#). The plan addresses the status of wildlife species and their habitats, ongoing restoration efforts, and public recreation opportunities on the Olympic-Willapa Hills Wildlife Area. Every 10 years, WDFW revises management plans for each wildlife area to identify new management priorities and actions. In between plan revisions, the updates focus on recent accomplishments over the last two years.

Olympic-Willapa Hills Wildlife Area consists of 20 plus satellite units that collectively encompass over 12,000 acres in WDFW's Region 6. The management program consists of maintenance of game fields that provide optimal winter elk forage, maintenance of areas to provide optimal waterfowl areas (sheet water production), and management and maintenance of a fleet of machinery to successfully do the job. Maintaining elk habitat and producing waterfowl habitat ensures optimal hunting and other recreational opportunities

for the public to enjoy, as well as keeping areas debris and trash free for wildlife and people.

Management Highlights

The Wynoochee Mitigation Unit (Objective – Maintain big game populations, Strategy O)

Although these areas are grouped together for reporting purposes, the Wynoochee Mitigation Project is funded by Tacoma Power as mitigation for lost habitat from the Wynoochee Dam project. The unit (approximately 400 acres) was mowed annually in 2018-2019 and staff fertilized approximately 300 acres for the 2018-2019 seasons. Prior to farming activities, staff brushed the perimeters of Wynoochee units, which consists of approximately 100 acres, and brushed the perimeter of the Olympic area's approximately 80 acres. In 2018-2019 there were approximately 180 acres reseeded to maintain high quality winter elk forage. Road and culvert maintenance was also performed on the unit. Department staff has had to deal with off-road vehicles which cause damage to the landscape and harasses wildlife.



Reseeding in the Wynoochee Mitigation Unit

John's River Wildlife Area (Objective – Maintain weeds consistent with state and county rules and protect and recover fish and wildlife and their habitats, Strategy A)

John's River Wildlife area was mowed annually to control Reed canary grass and other invasive species, as well as create sheet water habitat and green feed for waterfowl and optimal hunting opportunity. Approximately 91 acres have been mowed annually and 2 miles of roads and trails were maintained. This included approximately .67 miles of paved ADA trail, which provides access to an ADA duck blind and the forage area. Two water control structures were maintained, which allows water to be manipulated behind the

dikes (flooded). Two large seven foot culverts on the Eastside access road were cleared monthly of debris. This area continually has a high rate of garbage dumping requiring cleanup multiple times throughout the year.



Sheet water on the John's River Wildlife Area



New water control structure on the John's River Wildlife Area

Capital Projects at the John's River Wildlife Area (Objective – Provide public access compatible with fish, wildlife, and habitat protection, Strategy E)

Capital projects at John's River included resurfacing the ADA trail (.67 miles), constructing a new ADA loading ramp, and replacing the south cross dike water control structure. The cross dike project was done with state Duck Stamp money and Ducks Unlimited engineering.

Chehalis Wildlife Area (Strategy L)

Chehalis Wildlife Area was mowed annually to control Reed canary grass and other invasive species, as well as to provide sheet water areas for waterfowl habitat and optimal hunting opportunities. Along with mowing approximately 111 acres, there are approximately 2.39 miles of access roads to maintain. Chehalis Wildlife Area also has a paved ADA trail of approximately .25 miles, which was maintained throughout the year to ensure access to the ADA hunting blind. In the main parking area off Schouweiler Road, WDFW staff also erected a new fence to replace the old one. This area continually has a high rate of garbage dumping and is cleaned multiple times throughout the year.

Chinook Unit (Objective - Provide public access compatible with fish, wildlife, and habitat protection, Strategy U and Protect and restore estuary habitat, Strategy D)

The Chinook Unit has been mowed annually to control reed canary grass and other invasive species and provide sheet water areas for optimal waterfowl hunting. This area is also a pheasant release area and supports a sizeable elk herd. There are six access points that are maintained, including fence repair and garbage removal. Property which includes approximately one acre with a house on it was recently acquired. This property is adjacent to the original Chinook parcel and was purchased as part of the total restoration concept of the Chinook River Flood Plain as part of the salmon recovery plan for the Columbia River. This area is maintained by funding from both Bonneville Power Administration and Duck Stamp.

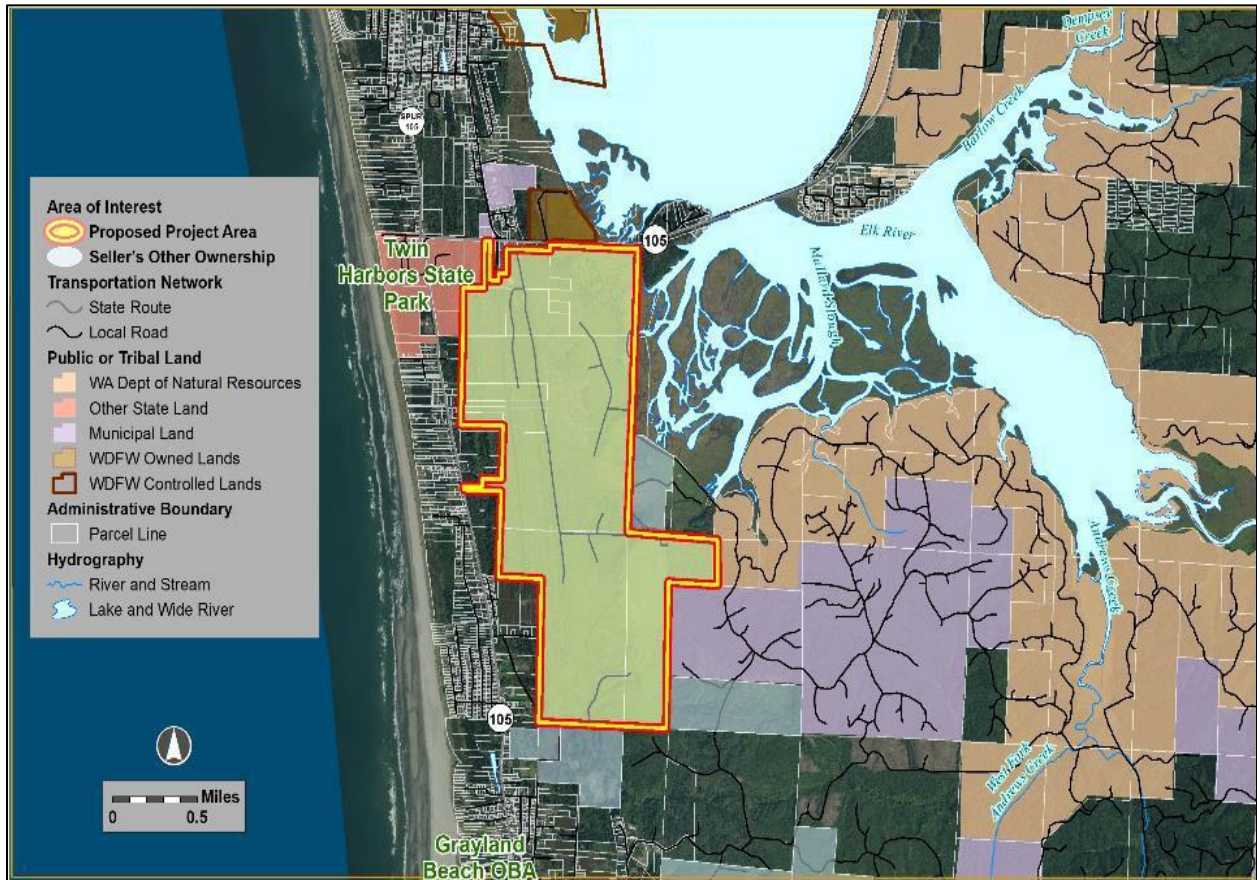


Mowing on the Chinook Unit

Grayland Acquisition

There has been a new acquisition in Grays Harbor County (Grayland property) which consists of approximately 1,750 acres. The acquisition was done in two stages. Department staff are planning for both controlling invasive species and providing public access. Recreation opportunities will include big and small game hunting, waterfowl hunting,

hiking, birdwatching, and many other activities. Historically this property was private land, and there seems to be high public interest for access.



Newly acquired Grayland Unit

Winter Maintenance

During the winter months, wildlife area staff service and maintain equipment to ensure it's prepared for the upcoming season. Most of the repairs are done in-house except for issues that can only be done by the dealer or a certified mechanic. Most of the equipment is outdated and tired, so staff do their best to prolong use.



A 1970 Ford-5000 with new parts and paint



Black bear