



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Management Plan

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is developing a new management plan for the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area in central Washington. Protecting species and habitat while providing quality access to public lands requires planning and active land management. The wildlife area, located in Kittitas County, covers approximately 119,000 acres in five units. The landscape is a mix of shrubsteppe, coniferous forest, and riparian habitat. The first property that became part of the wildlife area was purchased in 1966, and the last was the Teanaway Valley Unit in 2017.

The wildlife area is managed to protect critical winter range for deer and elk, as well as provide and protect upland game bird habitat. Approximately 2,000 elk are fed on the wildlife area each winter to minimize damage to neighboring private agricultural lands. From mid-December until mid-March, hay is distributed daily at two feed sites, which provide popular elk viewing and educational opportunities. These properties also protect sage-grouse habitat and endangered steelhead.

Public recreational opportunities on the wildlife area are diverse, and include hunting, camping, fishing, wildlife and wildflower viewing opportunities, target shooting, off-highway vehicle (OHV) and snowmobile riding, horseback and bike riding, and hiking. The wildlife area has seen a dramatic increase in uses such as OHV riding, bird watching, and shed antler collecting. By actively managing lands, restoring habitats, and preserving wild places, WDFW serves as stewards for Washington's natural places, protecting the state's land and water for human and wildlife populations. The new wildlife area management plan will address topics such habitat preservation and enhancement, maintaining big game populations, managing for species diversity, protecting and restoring native plant communities, controlling weeds, addressing illegal activities, and providing diverse public recreation opportunities.

Following is a brief description of the five units of the wildlife area that will be covered in the plan.

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wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas





L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Units

L.T. Murray Unit

The L.T. Murray Unit contains coniferous forest and shrubsteppe habitat, with riparian corridors meandering throughout. Elk, deer, bighorn sheep, forest grouse, turkey, quail, and a myriad of small mammals, neotropical and upland birds, raptors, and reptiles make their home or pass through here. Forest improvement projects are currently underway, while recent conservation efforts are returning federally-listed salmon and steelhead to the Manastash and Taneum watersheds. This unit offers dispersed camping and a primitive Green Dot road network. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching are all popular.

Teanaway Valley Unit

The Teanaway Valley Unit consists of coniferous forest, meadow, and historic agricultural fields. Elk, deer, wolf, turkey, grouse, quail, and a myriad of small mammals, neo-tropical and upland birds, raptors, and reptiles can be found here. The property is bisected by the main stem of the Teanaway River, which hosts both resident and federally-listed steelhead and salmon. Sitting amidst the Teanaway Community Forest, the property was purchased to protect endangered species, so recreation development will be limited. The unit has a parking area and non-motorized use is welcome.

WDFW developing new plans for wildlife areas

WDFW manages nearly one million acres of land, divided into 33 wildlife areas. These areas attract millions of visitors who hunt, fish, and observe wildlife in their natural environments. Each area is guided by a management plan that addresses wildlife species and habitats, public recreation, habitat restoration, operations and maintenance (such as weed management and facility improvements), and other activities to meet the department's mission of preserving, protecting, and perpetuating fish, wildlife, and ecosystems. Plans are revised periodically to reflect current conditions and the progress of past activities, and to identify new management priorities. WDFW engages local communities on advisory committees to help develop each management plan and provide feedback throughout the process.

Whiskey Dick Unit

The Whiskey Dick Unit offers steep, rocky slopes and rolling ridges and canyons, most of which are covered by shrubsteppe habitat. The Wild Horse Wind Farm, owned by Puget Sound Energy, is adjacent to the unit boundary. Lack of parking and very primitive roads limit access to this unit.

Yakima River Unit

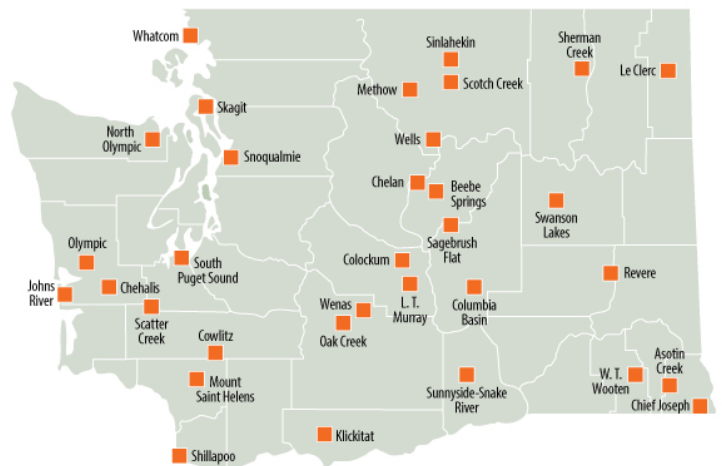
The Yakima River Unit consists of multiple properties along the Yakima River, near Easton State Park. The largest property is south of the river in the eastern foothills of the Central Cascades, and includes Cabin and Cole creeks. The uplands are coniferous forest. These lands are primarily managed for federal and state-listed species and other species of concern. Recreational opportunities on the unit include hunting, snowmobiling, and wildlife watching.

Quilomene Unit

The Quilomene Unit offers steep, rocky slopes and rolling ridges and canyons, most of which are covered in shrubsteppe habitat. The Wild Horse Wind Farm is adjacent to the Quilomene Unit. A portion of the unit included in the Wild Horse Coordinated



Resources Management Area and grazed with cattle. Lack of parking and very primitive roads limit access to this unit.



For more information about the wildlife area planning effort, please contact Patricia Jatzcak at (360) 902-2815 or email LTMurrayPlan@dfw.wa.gov.