



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary/Decision Sheet

Meeting date:

6/21/2024

Agenda item:

4. Land Transactions

Presenter(s):

Lisa Coffman, Real Estate Services, Lands 20/20 and Acquisition Funding Coordinator

**Items 1 & 2: Hunter Mountain North Project in Okanogan County, Region 2
Methow Wildlife Area, Hunter Mountain Unit, Two Properties**

Background summary:

The objective of the Hunter Mountain North Project is to acquire wildlife habitat in the Hunter Mountain Unit of the Methow Wildlife Area in Okanogan County. This project will protect and conserve sagebrush steppe habitat for winter mule deer populations, sagebrush obligate species and the state endangered Gray Wolf, improving the mobility of species by enhancing the east-west wildlife corridor connecting state and federal lands.

The project including both properties was approved through Lands 20/20 as an expedited application in the spring of in 2022. Funding for the properties is provided through a Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Critical Habitat grant.

**Item 1: Acquisition of 280(+/-) Acres in Okanogan County, Region 2
Methow Wildlife Area, Hunter Mountain Unit, Mill's Flat South
(Hunter Mountain North Project)**

Proposal of the Mills Flat South property of the Hunter Mountain Project is for 280(+/-) acres and the appraised value of this acquisition is \$504,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed property is expected to be \$125 per acre and will be included in WDFW's 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Okanogan County does currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) as provided for in [RCW 77.12.203](#). This property is expected to add an additional \$1,680 annually to Okanogan County's PILT payment.

**Item 2: Acquisition of 240(+/-) Acres in Okanogan County, Region 2
Methow Wildlife Area, Hunter Mountain Unit, Mill's Flat North
(Hunter Mountain North Project)**

Proposal of the Mills Flat North property of the Hunter Mountain Project is for 240(+/-) acres and the appraised value of this acquisition is \$480,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed property is expected to be \$125 per acre and will be included in WDFW's 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Okanogan County does currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) as provided for in [RCW 77.12.203](#). This property is expected to add an additional \$1,440 annually to Okanogan County's PILT payment.

**Item 3: Acquisition of 2(+/-) Acres in Okanogan County, Region 2
Scotch Creek Wildlife Area, Chesaw Unit, Chesaw Additions Inholding**

Background summary:

The proposed Chesaw addition property is the acquisition of a 2(+/-) acre inholding within the Chesaw Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. This acquisition would help to minimize management difficulties in the area and protect shrubsteppe, grasslands and mixed conifer on the property. Species of benefit in this unit and on the property include Mule Deer, Sharptailed Grouse and Gray Wolf.

The Chesaw Additions property was approved through Lands 20/20 in the 2023 cycle and is funded by a title insurance claim held in a Special Wildlife Account referred to as the West Fork Timber Settlement. The appraised value of the Chesaw Additions acquisition is \$17,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed property is expected to be \$95 per acre and will be included in WDFW's 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Okanogan County does currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) as provided for in [RCW 77.12.203](#). This property is expected to add an additional \$12 annually to Okanogan County's PILT payment.

**Items 4 & 5: North Willapa Bay Estuaries and Shoreline Project in Pacific County, Region 6
Johns River Wildlife Area, North Willapa Bay Unit, Two Properties**

Background summary:

The objective of the North Willapa Bay Estuaries and Shoreline Project is to acquire to protect important wetland, riparian and shoreline adjacent forest habitats adjacent to Willapa Bay in the Johns River Wildlife Area in Pacific County. These properties will help to maintain ecological function and protect fish and wildlife species of special concern including the Marbled Murrelet, Band Tailed Pigeon, and North American Green Sturgeon among others. One objective of the project is to fully connect currently isolated

parcels of publicly owned land in a manner that improves recreational access beyond the simple addition of acreage. This project will also help improve degraded wetlands and aquatic habitats that will provide a huge opportunity for improvements to be made with restoration efforts.

The project including both properties was approved through Lands 20/20 as an expedited application in the spring of in 2022. Funding for the properties is provided through a Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Riparian Protection grant.

**Item 4: Acquisition of 242(+/-) Acres in Pacific County, Region 6
Johns River Wildlife Area, North Willapa Bay Unit, Property C**

Proposal of the property identified as “C” of the North Willapa Bay Estuaries and Shoreline Project is 242(+/-) acres and the appraised value of this acquisition is \$605,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed property is expected to be \$125 per acre and will be included in WDFW’s 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Pacific County does not currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes).

**Item 5: Acquisition of 45(+/-) Acres in Pacific County, Region 6
Johns River Wildlife Area, North Willapa Bay Unit, Property H**

Proposal of the property identified as “H” of the North Willapa Bay Estuaries and Shoreline Project is 45(+/-) acres and the appraised value of this acquisition is \$155,000.

Ongoing operation and maintenance costs for this proposed property is expected to be \$125 per acre and will be included in WDFW’s 9v decision package for ongoing operation and maintenance for newly acquired land.

Per [RCW 77.12.201](#), Pacific County does not currently opt into PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes).

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend Commission approval to acquire all five properties pursuant to [RCW 77.12.037](#).

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Protecting critical habitat and riparian habitat and providing recreational opportunities.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

Operation and maintenance costs.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of these land transactions.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the land transactions as presented by staff.

Is there a "second"?

If so, then motion maker discusses basis for motion; other Commissioners discuss views on motion; amendments, if any, proposed and addressed.

Post decision communications plan:

WDFW will distribute a press release informing the public of this action.