

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Meeting

August 3, 2016

10-11:30 a.m.

Qualco Energy Conference Room, Crescent Lake Wildlife Area

18147 203rd St SE

Monroe, WA. 98272

AGENDA

1. WAAC Administration (15 mins)
2. Wildlife Area Management Plan – Process, Timeline & Next Steps (40 mins)
3. Dog Training Subgroup Update (10 mins)
4. Other Outreach for WLA Plan Development (15 mins)
5. Public Comment (10 mins)
6. Adjourn

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Meeting Notes

August 3, 2016

Qualco Energy Conference Room, Crescent Lake WLA

10:00 - 11:30 am

WAAC Members Attending:

Brent Hackney, Jeff Wolf, David Steiner, Wayne Gullstad, Martha Jordan, Perry Falcone

Not attending: Troy Rahmig, David Sharp

WDFW Staff: Brian Boehm, Melinda Posner, Patricia Jatzcak

Welcome and Introductions

Brian Boehm, Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Jeff Wolf, who was attending the WAAC for the first time. Two members of the public were present. Patricia Jatzcak was introduced as the new Planning Project Manager (*replacing Jeanne Demorest*). Melinda Posner, Planning, Recreation and Outreach Section Manager, explained the focus of the meeting is to provide an overview of the wildlife area planning process, timeline, as well as updates and discussion.

WAAC Administration

Brian set the stage for the meeting with Agency mission and Wildlife Area (WLA) planning goals. The purpose of the Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) is to assist WDFW in developing the Snoqualmie WLA Management Plan update in accordance with the Agency mission and WLA planning goals. The members of the public were given an opportunity to provide comments at the beginning of the meeting. They delayed providing comments until the end.

WLA Planning Overview and Process

Melinda walked through the purpose of WLA plan, which sets the vision for the WLA for the next 8-10 years. The goals and objectives that are identified become the focus of the two-year updates. New things in this process include integrating the objectives of the WDFW Wildlife, Fish, and Habitat, programs into the plans, as well as incorporating forest management, ecological integrity and climate change. A goal is to expand the stakeholder outreach during this planning process, following a statewide strategy for public outreach, and tailoring it for the specific interests in each WLA.

For the Snoqualmie Plan, one customization of the statewide outreach strategy is the formation of a dog training sub-group. The sub-group includes representation from most of the dog club leaders, and has met once already, and agreed to meet again. The purpose of the sub-group is to bring the many dog training interests together and have some focused dialogue about dog training needs and desires. The group's input will be considered by WDFW staff and the WAAC for integration in the overall WLA plans. (*See Dog Training Sub-group Update below.*)

WAAC Representation

Brian asked if the group felt they had the right representation for the issues they have to address. He introduced the two absent members so that everyone was aware of their interests. The group felt that the interests were adequately represented.

Brian noted his past effort to reach out to agricultural interests, hunter groups and wildlife viewers for inclusion on the WAAC. People contacted were either too busy, didn't identify with a larger group, and/or felt their interests would be represented by other WAAC members.

Community Outreach

The dog training community was very well represented at the April scoping meeting. People with other interests in the wildlife area sent comments, but did not attend the meeting. It is not unusual to have a large showing of a particular interest group. To improve transparency and to collect input from diverse interests/users of the Snoqualmie WLA, staff is interested in what ideas WAAC members have about building awareness of the process with others.

Members agreed that they will bring forward the interests of many of those who are not on the WAAC. Most committee members are connected through social media with local natural resource-related stakeholders and partners, as well as user groups. They are all comfortable with the role of sharing information out with larger groups of people, and bringing feedback into the process.

Members discussed other ways to inform and engage people in the planning process, including making presentations at other groups, such as the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum and sportsmen's clubs. The issue of access for disabled users was discussed relation to flooding and trail inaccessibility. It was mentioned that the *Floodplains by Design* partnership provides a new funding source for floodplain planning, integrating flood, fish and farming issues. Access can be part of it.

The group discussed when was a good time for stakeholder meetings to occur, and felt that anytime would be appropriate, and that being flexible was desired. A good time to do stakeholder outreach is when the planning objectives for the WLA are established, and during the draft plan review.

Other comments from members included providing more information to the general public, including that it would be helpful if they knew about the history of the WLA. A well-timed article in newspaper before meetings could provide information about why they should care, and how to get involved or informed.

Goals and Objectives Development

Melinda described the roles of planning team and WAAC in preparing the goals and objectives and draft plan. WAAC members' key role is to provide input on the goals and objectives, and to review and comment on the draft WLA management plan. WAACs typically meet at the scoping phase of the plan and when the draft plan is ready for review.

Timeline

The WDFW planning team will meet in early September, and all of the information collected to-date will be compiled, and additional needs identified. A draft plan will be produced, and another WAAC meeting be convened in October or November.

Dog Training Sub-group Update:

Many people interested in dog training on WDFW lands came to the April public scoping meeting. Staff at that time said they would schedule additional outreach with this group. After the April public meeting, more input from this group was provided, including letters and public testimony at the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

To hold more focused dialogue with these groups, a sub-group was convened of Dog Club leaders in the dog training community. One meeting was held with them, and the focus was to understand their needs. A second meeting has been scheduled for August 18.

Public Comment

Dog Training

The public comment period led to more discussion about the dog training issue.

A comment was made that the dog trainers want to know why things are changing, especially regarding the status of the gate. The gate used to be closed, but was left open for a number of years, and now is closed again.

There was discussion of what is allowed on state lands, when permits are needed, and the prohibition of activities that lead to commercial gain. Comments were made that the WLAs are designated for wildlife-oriented recreational activities. The use of the area as an off-leash dog park is not consistent with the purpose of the WLA or under requirements for the Cherry Valley Unit and others.

Of the people interested in dog training who attended the April 11 public meeting, very few purchased western Washington pheasant licenses and claimed Cherry Valley as their primary hunting unit. There are conflicts between the needs of the individual hunters who train their dogs on WLA lands, and dog clubs that conduct training at a higher capacity and hold dog trial and field test events.

While groups who seek permits for activities on WLA lands are not required to put in volunteer hours on the WLA, it could be something to consider. An example was the mountain biking community and the extensive volunteer restoration and trail building they do. It was suggested that volunteer hours could be built in and mandated to support activities, but more information is needed on this. Permit fees are not nearly enough to support the impact of these activities. It is more than a financial issue; it was felt there should be shared responsibility for the costs and damages of activities and the impact on the operations.

A comment was made that there needs to be a voice for individual people and hunters who just want to train and condition their own dogs. Commenter would like to see a clear differentiation between commercial and individual interests.

The events that the dog training clubs want to have are different than individual dog training and conditioning, and require much more resources. Additionally, they impact the regular user's ability to recreate on the Unit.

Other Public Comment Topics

There was a comment about water levels in the ponds, flooding, and access. Some of the ponds are dry or filling in, but that is part of the natural cycle of ponds. The ponds are all artificial. One comment was made that Waterwheel Creek has impacted water levels, however dog trainers don't use that area. There is more flooding in Cherry Valley. An access point is needed for duck hunters.

Next Steps:

Homework for the committee is to think about groups they represent or are in communication with, and how to most effectively get information out to them and input back from them. Members should consider what additional tools or information staff can provide to assist.