

Draft 12/5/17

**Note:** These are the facilitation team's summary of the meeting; Committee consensus is documented in the Committee's report and recommendations.

## Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Advisory Committee

November 14, 2017 – Selah Civic Center

### Meeting Summary

#### Committee Members in Attendance

Bill Essman  
Tim Funkhouser  
Bret Hollar  
Keely Hopkins  
Walt Hyde

Brian Lund  
Jim Lydigsen  
Steve Miller  
Clay Meyers  
Craig O'Brine

Norm Peck  
Mark Pidgeon  
Scott Robertson  
Tanya Stanley  
Rachel Voss

#### Facilitators

Elizabeth McManus and Andy Chinn, Ross Strategic

#### Agency Representation

Cindi Confer-Morris, WDFW  
Aaron Garcia, WDFW  
Ross Huffman, WDFW

Larry Leach, WDNR  
Nathan Longoria, WDFW  
Mike Livingston, WDFW

Scott McCorquodale, WDFW  
Bob Weaver, WDFW

#### Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth McManus welcomed meeting participants and reviewed the meeting agenda. Elizabeth reminded Committee members that this was the second to last meeting, and the remaining work is to determine the words that go into the final Committee report. The goal is to complete as much as possible prior to the December meeting so that the December meeting is mostly finalizing and submitting the Committee's report to WDFW.

#### Draft Recommendations

Committee members worked through the draft recommendations. A summary of Committee comments and questions that arose around specific recommendations is below.

#### Committee Discussion:

- Recommendation 8
  - Recommendation 8 is brief and vague.
  - The Committee's emphasis is on increasing education and outreach, especially during high-use times at shooting areas. WDFW staff could be in the field for a variety of reasons, but education and outreach should always be part of their work.
  - Elizabeth noted that the Committee's likely options are: 1) Add more language to the recommendations; 2) Come up with some text that works well enough for the purpose of this report, knowing that the Committee will continue to provide input.
- Recommendations 8, 9, and 10
  - Recommendations 8, 9, and 10 make up a package related to education and outreach.
  - For recommendation 10: Working with volunteers, it is difficult to count on people to show up (especially during hunting season).

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- Recommendation 13
  - Recommendation 13 was amended to reflect that CORT is the class offered by the Eyes in the Woods organization.
- Recommendation 12
  - Captain Weaver clarified the percent of time that WDFW Region 3 enforcement spends patrolling public lands.
- Recommendation 4
  - Committee members recommended removing some of the suggestions around signs (e.g., flags, children playing).
  - Committee members had mixed opinions about whether to suggest installing signs at areas where conflicting uses occur. Some members cautioned that if suggested locations are removed from the Committee's report, it will appear that the Committee did not consider areas of conflict. On the other hand, if only a few areas are mentioned then the public might assume that other areas are "safer".
  - Committee members decided to keep the areas listed for conflicting uses, and describe them as "examples".
  - Committee members recommended that specific wording on signs be left up to WDFW.
- Recommendation 11
  - If the Committee's recommendations will create an enforcement expectation, it should be rule-regulated. However, if the Committee is going to provide guidance but not an enforcement expectation, that is generally a well-received option (i.e., hard and fast rules, versus directional guidance).
    - Directional/positive messaging usually works better than "No \_\_ allowed" messaging.
    - WDFW might consider directional messaging and then move toward more restrictive messaging over time – as appropriate and as needed.
  - If an enforceable rule is created at the enhanced sites (i.e., you are not allowed to shoot .50 caliber ammunition or above), then it seems like people will move to dispersed shooting locations.
  - NRA staff recommended exclusion of .50 caliber ammunition or above from enhanced sites; WDFW and DNR should adopt regulatory language that lists prohibited firearms.
  - If WDFW adopts DNR rules, one of the DNR requirements is for a clear backstop. In other words, there is enough specificity in the DNR rules to take care of enforcement issues.
  - "In compliance" can be a highly subjective phrase, for example if the rule says a backstop must be "adequate", there is little specificity in the definition.
    - DNR noted that it has never had to test the definition of a backstop in court.
    - Law enforcement officers act in many subjective areas (with the exception of traffic laws) and backstops are a common example. In the case of backstops, there is sufficient regulation for law enforcement to act.
    - WDFW enforcement suggested that it will be easier for officers to enforce the "violation of a posted sign" rule than for WDFW to change its WAC.
    - There should be better/clearer guidelines in the WDFW WAC about what activities are permissible.

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- Listing out all of the firearms that are or are not permitted at the enhanced sites would be counterproductive. It is not the Committee's responsibility to locate all places and types of firearms appropriate for such places.
- Recommendation 17
  - If dispersed shooting at Buffalo Road continues, it will become a single-user (shooting) location. Horse riders like to use the trail at Buffalo Road, especially in the spring to get the horses back in shape.
  - An effective safety zone for enhanced shooting would exclude the existing area at Buffalo Road. A location further up the road would likely be able to accommodate an effective safety zone. This would require improvements to the road for better ease of access.
- General Comments on Dispersed Shooting and Enhanced Shooting Locations
  - The working theory behind enhanced shooting locations is to attract users to certain enhanced locations, thereby lowering the amount of dispersed shooting that occurs in areas where user conflicts arise.
  - If signs are not posted advising people not to shoot in certain locations, people will go wherever they want.
  - Education and outreach will take time to work.
  - There are already sufficient WACs in place to address dispersed shooting.
  - Shotgun use should not be banned from the Sheep Company Road site.
- Recommendation 2
  - Committee members have different levels of specificity on phasing of recommendations.
  - Since the state still does not have a capital budget it does not make sense to be specific on phasing.
  - With phasing, the Committee is not intending to dictate what WDFW should do, and when. The phasing recommendation is intended to acknowledge that not all of the recommendations can be implemented at once.
  - Phasing should include identifiable and measurable milestones.

#### Next Steps

- Ross Strategic will check in with Committee members not present at the meeting for their feedback on the draft recommendations.
- Ross Strategic will help organize small groups for follow up conversations on enhanced shooting locations.
- Ross Strategic will circulate a second and final online straw poll for final thoughts on the draft recommendations.

#### Public Comments

- I am a landowner on Overlook Rd near proposed East Umtanum site; we had an incident during deer hunting season where people w/assault rifles ran all the hunters off. East Umtanum is within 1/2 mile of year-round live in homes. People use the Overlook Rd which parallels the proposed site. You are going to be bringing people together from two different locations. Please take a good look at East Umtanum as a recommended site because of the number of people that access it from Overlook, and shooters.

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- I walk out on the Wenas Wildlife Area, ride horses, walk my dog. For the Buffalo Road area - it's very unsafe. I use the trail that Walt was talking about quite frequently, and I didn't realize that that trail led me directly in front of where people are shooting. My concern is - you talked about signage which is great - would have helped me pay attention - but how does that help me? If I go out there and there are no shooters but coming back - if I hear them shooting I can't come back over the ridge. One time I tried to go around. I just want you to keep in mind the safety aspect. Why can't we prohibit shooting just in those areas that area where everything converges? I was hoping the committee would address that specifically.

[Meeting adjourned]

**Meeting Materials (available [online](#))**

- Meeting agenda
- Draft Committee recommendations

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