

Updates to W.T. Wooten sections of management plan

UPDATES / CHANGES

Elk Fence: WDFW received a settlement from a lawsuit in summer of 2008 and the funds will be used to contract with DNR to bring inmate crews in to reconstruct the remaining 8 miles of burned elk fence. Crews began work July 1, 2008 and completed 7 miles of the fence by the end of September. The crews will return in April 2009 to complete the fence construction by June 30, 2009. WDFW needs to research ways to provide a fire barrier along the elk fence to reduce the chances of it burning again.

NEW ISSUES

Watson Lake Road Relocation: Through the RMAP project, a portion of the road from Deer Lake to Watson Lake is going to be moved away from the Tucannon River and along the base of the hill. The purpose of the project is to move the road away from the river to reduce the amount of sediments deposited into the river. The project will be completed by fall of 2009.

Tucannon Lakes: The 8 lakes on the WT Wooten WLA are in need of serious repair. The dams have needed repair for a number of years, but no funding has been provided to complete the work. The lakes need to be considered individually and prioritized whether to close them, fix them, or rehabilitate them. Spring Lake and Rainbow Lake, in particular, are becoming very shallow and temperatures are warming up. Both need dredged to continue to provide enjoyable fisheries for the public. Big 4 Lake is in danger of high water in the Tucannon River eventually washing it out. The importance of Big 4 Lake needs to be considered and whether it should be repaired or no longer kept as a lake.

Tucannon Power Line: The Habitat Biologists are looking into burying the Columbia REA power line that runs through the WT Wooten Wildlife Area. The purpose of burying the line is to reduce the chances of another fire on the Wildlife Area. The beginning steps have been taken on the project, but things have been put on hold due to the budget crisis.

Sensitive Period Closures: Due to winter weather conditions stressing wildlife, sensitive period closures should be made permanent from year to year. One location that would benefit from a winter area closure is Cummings Creek, which has been closed periodically during the winter months. Closing the area to all human access will decrease the extra stress put on the wildlife during that critical time period. Other areas on the Wildlife Area should be looked at periodically to create closures during sensitive time periods as necessary.

MAJOR STEWARDSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Food Plots: The food plots on Abels Ridge were replanted in fall of 2008 to produce wildlife forage and habitat in 2009. In addition to Abels Ridge, approximately 3 acres at the headquarters were cultivated and planted to a turnip/clover mix in 2008. The foodplot was irrigated throughout the summer and produced a tremendous amount of feed for

wildlife. The plots will be monitored and replanted as necessary to keep a forage source available for the wildlife.

STATUS REPORT OF 2009 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2008 Performance Measures	Status of Performance Measures	Progress/ 2009 Related Activities/ Comments
Irrigate pastures	Headquarters and Hartsock fields irrigated throughout the summer	Continue in 2009
Establish and maintain food plots (15 acres each)	A mix of sunflowers and corn was planted in the Hartsock fields in 2008.	Plant turnip/clover mix at Hartsock in 2009
Maintain 8 lakes	Water level and inlet/outlet structures were maintained weekly.	Continue maintenance in 2009
Maintain Spring Lake dike, repair damage caused by vegetation	Salvage logging funds were Federal monies and could not be spent on this project.	Pursue another funding source in 2009
Maintain four mineral sites	Sites were replenished with new mineral blocks in 2008	Continue maintenance in 2009
Maintain information kiosk	WLA information was posted throughout the year.	Continue posting WLA activity information
Maintain 50 miles of boundary fence	Boundary fences were checked, fixed where needed, and maintained in 2008	WLA staff will continue regular maintenance.
Maintain western half of elk fence (10 miles)	Appx 13 miles of elk fence burned in the School Fire. WDFW engineers constructed 2 miles of fence in fall 2005, and contractors were hired to continue fence work in 2006. WDFW received a settlement in summer 2008 and set-up an agreement with DNR to use inmate work crews to reconstruct the elk fence by June 30, 2009.	DNR began elk fence reconstruction project in July 2008. Reconstruction will be completed in June 2009.
Maintain or improve 3 seeps on Abels Ridge	The spring at the head of McGowan Canyon was tapped and a new trough installed in July 2008.	Maintain McGowan spring in 2009. Work on improving another seep in 2009.
Reestablish food plot on Abels Ridge	Hunters Dream seed mix was planted in the food plots on Abels Ridge in October 2009	Food plots will be monitored in 2009 and replanted in 2011
Modify Wooten campgrounds	Construction staff began work in December 2006. CG2 and CG7 were closed due to riparian encroachment, the roads were scarified and seeded, and revegetation took place in spring 2007. Parts of CG5, CG6, and CG8 (located too close to wetland / riparian areas) were barricaded off and	Campgrounds were replanted in spring 2008.

	revegetated. New CG signs were purchased, along with picnic tables and fire rings. Backcountry Horsemen constructed and installed 10 hitching rails.	
Implement hazard tree removal contract	The 2005 School Fire and 2006 Columbia Complex Fire left lots of dead trees along the Tucannon River Road and the Camp Wooten Learning Center.	Hazard trees were removed in winter/spring of 2008.
Enroll 450 acres of Tucannon River in CREP	The enrollment process was started, but WDFW staff decided riparian areas were recovering well without further supplementation, and many areas of the Tucannon riparian zone were already planted in March 2006. Due to losses from the School Fire, an existing CREP project at Deer Lake was replanted to maintain the required stem count.	Monitor riparian planting success and maintain existing CREP project.
Annually spot treat 50 acres of weeds along roadsides and access sites	WLA staff spot sprayed weeds along Tucannon and Cummings Creek roads. Also treated Hartsock fields, Blue Lake field, and campgrounds. Access Technician sprays weeds in campgrounds and access areas twice weekly.	Continue weed treatments in 2009
Seek funding to bury the Columbia REA power line	Burying the power line will reduce the chances of another fire on the Wildlife Area.	Habitat Biologist Schirm began work on this in summer 2008.
Maintain 12 guzzlers and 6 troughs	Several of the guzzlers were damaged during the School fire and others have been damaged from high winds.	This task will be pursued in 2009. Need to find location information and determine if some guzzlers should be replaced or removed.
Revisit 33 post-fire monitoring photopoints	Photopoints were established following the 2005 School Fire to monitor vegetation regeneration.	Visit sites in May 2009.
Establish a forest bird survey transect	Due to changing of staff at the WT Wooten Wildlife Area this task was not accomplished.	Pursue this task in 2009.
Maintain/install 25 bluebird boxes and 10 wood duck boxes	Due to changing of staff at the WT Wooten Wildlife Area this task was not accomplished.	Pursue this task in 2009.

NEW STRATEGIES

Objective: Improve and Maintain Fish Populations

1. Work cooperatively with other watershed managers to identify and prioritize fish passage barriers on the wildlife area.
2. Improve one passage barrier annually as funds allow.
3. Identify and enhance one riparian area annually as funds allow.
4. Look for options to add large woody debris to streams, and do so as time and funds allow.
5. Prioritize Tucannon Lakes to close, fix, and rehabilitate as necessary.
6. Identify ways to decrease or minimize soil erosion and/or soil delivery to streams. Close roads, reseed roads, or rock roads as necessary to achieve goal.

Objective: Provide sound operational management of WDFW lands

1. Pursue funding and support to bury the power line that runs from the Tucannon Hatchery up to Camp Wooten.
2. Continue with elk fence reconstruction project being done through Department of Natural Resources.
3. Look at options to utilize wildlife friendly fence when replacing existing boundary fences.
4. Implement a permanent annual sensitive period closure in Cummings Creek to reduce stress on wildlife during critical time periods.

Objective: Protect, enhance and restore function and structure of native habitats

1. Annually revisit 33 photo-monitoring sites to assess post-fire and post-logging habitat recovery.
2. Identify and restore upland habitats that are in poor condition due to past land practices. Rehabilitate one area annually as funds allow.

2009 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 1) Irrigate Headquarters and Hartsock pastures in summer months
- 2) Maintain 8 lakes by monitoring inlet/outlet structures twice weekly and regulating water levels
- 3) Maintain 50 miles of boundary fence
- 4) Maintain 10 miles of elk fence. Look at ways to provide a fire barrier along fence.
- 5) Maintain or improve 3 seeps on Abels Ridge
- 6) Stock mineral blocks at four sites on Abels Ridge
- 7) Maintain 12 guzzlers and 6 troughs
- 8) Maintain/install 25 bluebird boxes and 10 wood duck boxes
- 9) Annually spot treat 50 acres of weeds along roadsides and access sites
- 10) Seek funding and support to bury the power line between Tucannon Hatchery and Camp Wooten
- 11) Revisit 33 post-fire monitoring photopoints in May
- 12) Identify and prioritize fish passage barriers on the wildlife area. Address at least 1 barrier annually as funds allow.
- 13) Identify and prioritize riparian areas on the wildlife area that can be enhanced. Address at least 1 area annually as funds allow.
- 14) Identify and restore upland habitats that are in poor condition due to past land practices. Address at least 1 area annually as funds allow.
- 15) Review state of Tucannon Lakes and prioritize lakes in need of maintenance. Work towards closing, repairing, or rehabbing lakes as needed.

CAG INPUT

Issue:

Response: