

Planning for Shooting Ranges on WDFW Land

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Summary Sheet

Meeting dates:	December 8-9, 2017
Agenda item:	Planning for Shooting Ranges on WDFW Land
Presenter(s):	Mike Livingston, Region 3 Director Dave Whipple, Hunter Education Division Manager, Wildlife Program

Background summary:

The purpose of this briefing is to provide the Commission with an update about the agency's shooting range program including: 1) Progress of the Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Advisory Committee; 2) Recommendation for target shooting rule change; 3) Status of acquiring land for the envisioned Central Washington Shooting Range; and 4) Assessing other WDFW lands for target shooting issues and improvements. A brief summary of each is included below:

1. Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Project

This spring the department hired a contractor to facilitate the process of managing target shooting on the Wenas Wildlife Area. In April, the 20 person Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee was formed representing multiple interest groups. The committee was tasked with developing recommendations to meet goals identified by the department. The committee has been actively working since its first meeting in May and a final report is expected by the end of the year. To date, the committee has developed 17 draft recommendations that can be grouped into 3 categories: Education and Outreach, Enforcement, and Site Management. The draft recommendations were the topic of two public listening sessions in October. At this time a majority of the recommendations address the original goals and are supported by the department. The committee recommends a phased approach for implementing recommendations. See Item #2.

2. Target Shooting Rule Change

To address public safety issues and provide consistent regulations and enforcement, the Wenas Target Shooting Project Advisory Committee recommends revising agency regulations (WAC 200-500-140) to match Washington Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) regulations. This is particularly important in areas such as the Wenas Wildlife Area, where the department and DNR have mixed ownership, and agency staff manage DNR lands under a lease agreement with DNR. DNR's target shooting rules include a recreational target shooting definition, require a backstop for target shooting, and limit target shooting over roads and trails. This rule change would implement new target shooting rules statewide.

3. Central Washington Shooting Range

Region 3 Director and Wildlife Program staff have been working with Kittitas County stakeholders including the Kittitas County Commission, Kittitas County Sheriff's Office and Kittitas Field and Stream Club to develop a shooting range and education/training center in central Washington. Property located east of Ellensburg has been identified for acquisition. Staff hopes to finalize an agreement with stakeholders in the coming months. We have a Capitol Budget request for clean-up of the location, and included in this discussion is the funding of site development and on-going operations and maintenance of such a new range.

4. Assessing WDFW lands for target shooting issues and improvements

A team of department headquarters and regional staff have been holding quarterly meetings to discuss target shooting issues at the Asotin and Sherman Creek wildlife areas in Region 1, and

the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area in Region 2, which all have popular sites for recreational target shooting. Staff may consider target shooting improvements in these areas, based on outcomes of the Wenas Wildlife Area Target Shooting Project.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Update about target shooting, including a proposed rule change is tentatively scheduled for commission meetings in June and August 2018.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

N/A

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The Wenas Target Shooting Advisory Committee has been meeting since May of this year, and has held two sets of public listening sessions to share information and collect additional public input. The Committee has developed a preliminary set of recommendations, which will be included in a December 2017 final report.

Action requested:

Briefing only.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Post decision communications plan:

Form revised 9/13/17