



COLOCKUM WILDLIFE AREA 2012 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Colockum Wildlife Area Management Plan (http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/index.htm) that provides management direction for the 91,603 acre Wildlife Area located in Chelan and Kittitas County, Washington. The plan identifies needs and guides activities on the area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated biennially as habitat and species conditions change, as new regulations and scientific knowledge develop, as public issues and concerns evolve, and as administration of wildlife areas change. This management plan update also includes 2010-11 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2012-13.

Updates/Changes

Forest road management work continues on the Wildlife Area, with WDFW completing many of the road maintenance issues required by WDFW’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) for the Colockum. The main focus of this work is to improve water quality and fish habitat by reducing delivery of sediments from forest roads into streams. Roadwork that has been completed includes installing water bars, improving drainage, replacing undersized culverts, and blocking and abandoning non-maintained roads. A major project was finished in August 2010 where a problem culvert in the South Fork of Tarpiscan Creek was replaced with a bridge. Flooding in May 2011 caused the bridge abutments to be undermined and the bridge abutments were reinstalled and the angle of crossing changed in June 2011. Changes in the land ownership pattern of the Wildlife Area are still underway. The Land Exchange between WDFW

Inside

Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	1
New Issues	2
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	2
Status Report of 2010-11 Performance	
Measures	3
New Strategies	4
2012-13 Performance Measures	4
Citizens Advisory Group Input	5

and Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is still moving forward, but at a slower pace and in a phased approach. Phase one of the Land Exchange has been completed with approximately 6,440 acres of WDNR lands being transferred into WDFW ownership. The checkerboard ownership pattern on the Colockum complicates agency land management, and is the main justification for exchanging and consolidating ownerships between WDFW and WDNR.

New Issues

WDFW will finish a study of Colockum elk on May 1, 2012. Approximately 150 elk have been radio collared for the past two years to determine their movements and habitat use. Hopefully data will be collected to assist in managing elk that sometimes move off the Wildlife Area and onto private lands, either to the north or south.

A trial run for supplementing the Quilomene Bighorn Sheep Herd started in early 2012. Eight bighorns were captured on the WDFW Oak Creek Wildlife Area and transplanted to the Colockum and Quilomene Wildlife Areas. Four sheep were collared and their survival will be monitored.

As of July 2011, WDFW entered into long-term leasing of approximately 2,560 acres of WDNR land in the Stemilt Basin. These lands include numerous small lakes managed as irrigation reservoirs for agriculture in the Stemilt Basin. These lakes are also very popular fishing and camping areas and receive heavy public use during the spring and summer. Numerous management challenges exist here as WDFW addresses recreation issues such as camping, road maintenance, weed control and litter.

The Grant County Public Utility District (GCPUD) completed a major project in 2011 related to erosion of shoreline areas along the Columbia River. Many sites, including several on the Colockum were armored with erosion control materials and then planted with native plant species in an effort to control erosion due to wave action of the reservoir.

WDFW is also still in the process of evaluating the entire road system on the Wildlife Area to identify possible problem areas. These could include areas where road densities are high leading to animal harassment and low spike bull elk escapement during fall hunting seasons. Other issues include stream adjacent roads in shrub-steppe habitat areas that are not addressed by the forest road RMAP plan.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments



In 2009 and 2010 the Wildlife Area Manager wrote successful grant applications to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) for the installation of vehicle gates for closed roads on the Wildlife Area. These gates are expected to increase compliance with the Green Dot Road Management System in place on the area. All the gates have now been fabricated, some by a local machine shop and some by the Wenatchee Valley

College welding program. Gate installation should start soon, using volunteers from groups like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Wenatchee Sportsman’s Association. Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant funds were used in 2011 to begin improvements at the Colockum boat launch. Work included installing a vault toilet, construction of an overflow parking area and construction of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) loading ramp. Improvement of the boat ramp itself should occur in 2012, replacing the rough, native rock ramp with concrete planks. In addition to these grant projects other more basic stewardship activities were continued. This includes the continued monitoring of public use through digital car counters that are installed at major entrances to the Wildlife Area. Weed control, boundary fence repair and maintenance of the Green Dot road system also continued to be a large part of the stewardship activities on the Colockum in 2011.

Status Report of 2010-11 Performance Measures

Key performance measures are identified each year to monitor progress and identify any issues that might interfere with planned priority activities. This information will be used to delete, add or alter priority strategies for 2012.

2010-11 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress/ 2012 Related Activity/ Comments
Meet periodically with new Citizen Advisory Group.	In progress	Colockum CAG meeting to be held May 2012.
Evaluate the effectiveness of winter range closures.	Five car counters monitored and one Enforcement flight conducted.	Continue monitoring public use, Colockum Elk Study underway.
Remove concrete diversion structure in Tekison Creek.	Project delayed	Tekison Creek Dam is leaking and causing a near impassable ford.
Continue process to address stream adjacent roads in Stray Gulch and Tekison Creek.	Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) Grant was awarded to fund road closure. Still awaiting a SEPA decision.	WWRP Grant was awarded and we are moving forward with the project.
Maintain 180 acres agricultural fields in annual grains or grasses.	In progress	120 acres in grain production
Maintain 35 miles of boundary fencing to exclude trespass livestock.	Completed	Continue maintenance in 2012
Seed 40 acres of bitterbrush and other native plants on West Bar.	In progress	Seeding scheduled to take place in fall 2012.
Coordinate road management with DNR.	On-going. New standards, signs for Green Dot Road Management developed.	Coordination will continue, bi-annual meetings held with Enforcement and land

		managers.
Inspect and maintain spring developments.	Two springs maintained, 4 upland bird guzzlers repaired.	Wenatchee Sportsman's Assoc. to maintain springs and guzzlers.
Perform mandatory weed control.	Coordinated with Kittitas Co. Weed Board on yellow starthistle control. Staff controlled knapweeds, whitetop, goatgrass.	Jointed goatgrass control in progress. New whitetop location was identified in 2011 that will need attention.
Complete RMAP work in the South Fork Tarpiscan Creek.	Completed	South Fork bridge was installed in August 2010 and corrected in June 2011.

New Strategies

The wildlife area plan identifies many strategies or activities to address the agencies strategic plan goals and objectives, why the area was purchased, habitat conditions, species present, and public issues and concerns. The following updated strategies have been added to respond to previously unaddressed or new issues or changes on the wildlife area. New strategies may also be in response to adaptive management as staff evaluate the impacts of past management activities.

If the Citizens Advisory Group provided public comments on new issues, they will be identified (*in italics*) at the end of this document. Although underlined strategies have no current funding source, identifying these needs is the first step to securing additional funds.

No new strategies were identified in this update.

2012-13 Performance Measures

Performance measures for the Colockum Wildlife Area are listed below. Accomplishments and progress toward desired outcomes will be monitored and evaluated annually.

- 1) Meet periodically with new Colockum Wildlife Area CAG to inform of management activities and receive public input.
- 2) Evaluate the success of winter closures on big game winter range to reduce disturbance. Determine success through continued use of car counters, Enforcement flights and the on-going Colockum Elk Study.
- 3) Continue effort to remove concrete diversion structure in Tekison Creek.
- 4) Continue process to address stream adjacent roads in Stray Gulch and Tekison Creek.
- 5) Continue cultivation of grain fields in the North Fork Tarpiscan Creek.
- 6) Maintain 35 miles of wildlife area boundary fence to exclude trespass livestock.
- 7) Coordinate cooperative road management system with DNR.
- 8) Inspect and maintain spring developments. Maintain springs with help from volunteer organizations.
- 9) Perform mandatory weed control. Control weeds along roads, campsites, boat launch and parking areas.

- 10) Seed 40 acres of bitterbrush and other native plants on West Bar.
- 11) Install 15 Gates on previously closed roads to promote compliance with the Green Dot Road System through a RMEF grant.

Citizens Advisory Group Input

A citizen advisory group meeting was held in Wenatchee on May 16, 2012. Attendees included:

Norm Gutzwiler – Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, local landowner
Ken Bailey – WA Backcountry Horseman
Brian Mize – WA DNR
Pam Camp – WA Native Plant Society
Tom Baskin – Disabled Hunters
Bill Stegeman – Wenatchee Sportsman Association
Mark Oswood – WA Audubon Society
Jim Burts – Apple Country Snowmobile Club
Pete Lopushinsky – Colockum Area Manager
Karl Schulke – Colockum Assistant Manager

Issues:

Stemilt DNR Lease

Tom - Would there be any changes to the ATV Rules or Green Dot Road Management now that it is managed by WDFW? Concerned about loss of road access for disabled folks.

Norm - We have too many roads that go to the same place. We can get rid of duplicate roads; it will just take longer to get to the same place.

Pete - No changes right now, it is possible something could change with the WDNR Recreation plan.

Norm - Wenatchee Heights Reservoir #2 dries up in the summer, no fish.

Brian - Steffens Meadows 4-wheeling, root wads placed to try to prevent off road driving.

Ken - Increase number of trails for horse riding. Stemilt is good area for horseback riding because of good road access for trailers.

Norm - Talk with Enforcement regarding harsher penalties for off road driving.

Tom - Increase sheriff's presence in the area; invite to future CAG Meetings.

Pete - WDFW Enforcement was going to be here tonight, but had to cancel.

Pam - Seasonal closure to protect the roads?

Norm - Prevent access to roads that aren't supposed to be used.

Tom - Continue allowing access for disabled hunters on closed roads, i.e. don't tear up roads but leave them so they are still easily traveled by wheelchair or walking. Possibly close roads in spring for a short time, just when needed.

Bill - Larger fines for off road travel, make the fines actually hurt instead of slap on the wrist.

Norm - Use grant money to buy cams for Enforcement of known violation areas. There are other groups that might help fund camera purchases.

Ken - Buy good quality cameras. Also, make sure signs are up and in good condition.

Jim - Possibly develop a pamphlet for spring driving awareness.

Pam - Use Birch Mountain seasonal closure as a guide. How well has it worked?

Norm - Enlist irrigation districts to provide eyes for violations. Trouble for the irrigation districts to buy off on the confrontation aspect for liability and added responsibility.

Longview Fiber Properties

Mark - Recommended working with Peter Hill from Trust for Public Lands concerned about the time it takes to get grant money.

Pam - Make Trust for Public Lands aware of our desire to purchase the properties. Contact Peter Hill possibly at the next Stemilt Partnership Meeting.

Norm - Possibly get the irrigation districts' help to purchase some land. The irrigation districts are worried about the subdivisions causing a large increase in the number of wells drawing down the water they can irrigate with. There is no extra water but domestic wells can be drilled by homeowners.

DNR Naneum State Forest Recreation Plan

Pam - Will there be different rules on DNR Recreation Lands regarding timber?

Brian - No impact of current timber uses. WDNR is still mandated by the multiple use mandates.

Norm - How will the new plans effect elk migration? Will elk migration and calving be taken into account when developing timber management and recreation plans and the effect of road harassment to elk? Elk don't like people and activity.

Brian - WDNR has found that it is worth decommissioning roads after logging to reduce the liability to road erosion issues for temporary logging roads. DNR has closed or decommissioned a lot of roads along streams or sensitive areas, especially in the southern parts of the Colockum. The number of Green Dot Road miles is set in stone but they are still looking at moving roads to protect sensitive areas. DNR is subject to forest practice rules.

Tom - No disabled hunters physically allowed on decommissioned roads because of the difficulty of travel. Possible to look at disabled only roads? Disabled hunters are losing access once roads get decommissioned. He is concerned with providing a quality hunt.

WDNR Land Exchange

Norm/Brian - Easier to manage lands when in one big chunk than in checkerboard pattern.

Colockum Natural Resources Center

Chelan County is now managing this facility, formally called the "Colockum Multiple Use Research Center" managed by Washington State University.

Pete - Increased issues with more use? Activity will be more than just college students working on degrees or kids in the creek.

Mark - Is there a caretaker on site to solve issues?

Pete - Not currently, road access is a problem after the 2011 flood.

Pam - Problems with hunting around a site like this with people and kids around?

Pete - Currently no agreement with CNRC regarding their use of WDFW Lands that were previously involved with the old WSU Colockum Research Center.

Norm - Supports educating kids about natural resources, but how to plan for 5-10 years down the road? Maybe place limitations in any agreement?

Mark - Use a sign up system, once it reaches a quota then no more.

Norm - Different level of uses and possibility of harm with 15 people vs 150.

Mark - Programs such as North Cascades Base Camp involved with the program? Could it be leased to a private group for environmental education?

Pam - Use area for environmental education.

? – Yearly or 5 year lease to address concerns that come up as the center evolves.

On-going projects

RMEF Gates

Norm – RMEF wants to work with Alcoa to produce some volunteer grants and can bring our volunteers to help the project.

Tekison/ Stray Gulch Road Abandonment

No comments

Boat Launch Improvement Project

Tom – ADA Loading Ramps work well for disabled persons. There are more of them on the west side.

Contacts:

Pete Lopushinsky, Wildlife
Area Manager
(509) 663-6260
WDFW Yakima Office
(509) 575-2740

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -
http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/management_plans/index.htm