



COLUMBIA BASIN WILDLIFE AREA 2007 MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Washington Ground Squirrel

Land Management Summary

This is an update to the 2006 Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Management Plan that provides management direction for the 14 Units of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. The plan describes needs identified by internal and external working groups, and guides activities on the Wildlife Area based on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Mission of “*Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife*” and its underlying statewide goals and objectives as they apply to local conditions.

Plans are updated annually 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 2006 accomplishments, new issues, new land management strategies and performance measures for 2007.

Updates/Changes

The Frenchman Ponds wetland enhancement project was eligible for funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Wetland Reserve Program. The NRCS will provide cost-share funding to pay for approximately 75% of the costs associated with swale and dike construction and installation of water control structures. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of

2007. The District Wildlife Biologist secured funds in the amount of \$166,000 for maintenance of this project and the wetland enhancement project near Desert Lake.

Inside	
Land Management Summary	1
Updates/Changes	1
New Issues	2
Major Stewardship Accomplishments	2
Status Report of 2006 Performance Measures	3
New Strategies	5
2007 Performance Measures	6
Citizens Advisory Group Input	7

Consultants completed a conceptual design for a wildlife viewing trail within the North Potholes Reserve. Construction of the trail and viewing area will provide a spot overlooking an exceptional colonial nesting bird rookery for visitors to observe the Great Blue, and Black-crowned Night Herons, Double-crested Cormorants and Great Egrets from a distance great enough to prevent disturbing the nesting birds. Authority for seasonal closure of the area has been requested.

New Issues

None.

Major Stewardship Accomplishments

A test of the feasibility of an alternative irrigation water feed route to the Potholes Reservoir in the fall of 2006 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation provided a continuous flow of water and several management challenges in the Gloyd Seeps Unit through mid-December. Operation of existing water control structures provided ample new waterfowl hunting opportunities through this normally dry stretch of Crab Creek.



Funding was secured from several sources to proceed with the construction of the Frenchman Ponds (TD-01) project. Ducks Unlimited contracted with WDFW to design, select a contractor and oversee the construction of dikes and swales, and replace existing water control structures. Actual construction was expected to begin in 2006, but will begin early in 2007. BPA provided funds for maintenance of the project, which will include armoring the dikes, vegetation control, further excavations and operation of the control structures.

Status Report of 2006 Performance Measures

2006 Performance Measure	Status of Performance Measure	Explanation of Progress, 2007 Related Activity, and/or Comments
Exclude cattle and vehicles from Section 17, Seep Lakes	Project delayed.	Assisted BOR with their fencing priorities.
Remove unwanted fish from the Westlake ponds, Potholes Reservoir Unit.	Applied rotenone to several small ponds to monitor effects on Northern leopard frogs.	District Fish Biologist supervised the aerial application with support from District Wildlife Biologist and Wildlife Area staff. Expect to expand program and include removal of undesirable vegetation.
Maintain irrigated tree and shrub plots.	Completed through summer 2006	Maintain in 2007
Maintain, relocate, or remove winter upland bird feeders as appropriate	Completed winter 2006	Maintain in 2007
Frenchman Ponds (TD-01) wetlands improvement project.	Completed Phase 1 with the construction of the inlet ditch and seeding of bare ground fall, winter 2005. Finalized funding and preliminary work for Phase 2.	Construction of Phase 2 expected to start spring 2007. Statewide Waterfowl Biologist will oversee, Wildlife Area staff will assist. WA staff will maintain and operate water control structures.
Desert Lake (TD-02) wetlands improvement project.	Completed excavations and constructed isolation berms fall of 2006.	WA staff will armor berms and plant appropriate vegetation on bare ground, and maintain through 2007.
Grazing and agricultural lease administration.	On-going	
Boundary fencing.	Worked with BOR to fence boundaries of 2 scattered tracts.	Expect to continue in 2007 on Seep Lakes Unit.
Moist soil management in the Gloyd Seeps Unit.	Mowed 2 acres of tall emergent vegetation, operated water control	Continue in 2007 with more mowing, flooding for vegetation control. Expect

	structure for moist soil management.	to assess practicality of moist soil management at the Mansfield Pond.
Tall emergent vegetation control on the Quality Hunting Area in the Desert Unit.	Tilled, mowed, and applied herbicide to tall emergent vegetation stands throughout the QHA.	Expect to apply herbicides to remaining stands inaccessible to tractors.
Controlled burn contract.	Project delayed.	Expect to start in 2007.
Grass plantings on the Upland Wildlife Restoration Unit.	Completed the planting of 14 acres.	Expect to replant where necessary, fallow and plant 10 acres in 2007.
Fire control and training	Maintained fire breaks, applied herbicides to access roads and parking areas to reduce fuel load. Manager and Assistant attended fire fighter training.	WA staff will maintain firebreaks, road shoulders and parking areas. Manager and Assistant will maintain fire fighter certification annually.
Survey islands within Potholes Reservoir for colonial nesting birds, post signs.	Completed	Will check, repost in 2007.
Establish east side parking lot at the Quality Hunting Area.	Parking area site and access was selected, and GPS'ed.	In 2007 parking area and route will be mowed and packed, graveled where necessary. Parking area will be designated.
Maintain shop, office, and equipment for safe and effective workplace.	Completed through 2006	Continue for 2007
Upgrade phone system	Phones ordered fall 2006	Complete spring 2007
Wireless internet capability	Completed winter 2006	Access to high speed internet has increased efficiency in accessing administrative programs (CAPS, Fastrack) and email.
Exhibit A to the BOR 25-year agreement.	Progressing, Parks boundary at Steamboat Rock on the Banks Lake Unit established.	On-going negotiations regarding which properties to include.
Water Service Contract with BOR	Historic water use was identified and presented to BOR.	Expect to finalize in 2007.

Mapping Lower Crab Creek Unit	ITS installed new ARCVIEW capable computer, fall 2006	ARCVIEW training, start mapping in 2007.
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New Strategies

Agency Objective: Protect, Restore & Enhance Fish and Wildlife and Their Habitats

1. Manage to protect State Listed and Candidate species on all Columbia Basin Wildlife Area units

- A. Strategy: Populations of Washington ground squirrels near the Warden Elementary School and Sage Hills Golf Course are threatened by development. CBWA staff will assist in translocation of Washington ground squirrels to suitable habitat in the Seeps Lake Unit. Timeframe: Spring on-going.
- B. Strategy: Improve habitats for Northern leopard frogs by control of undesirable fish and vegetation. CBWA staff will implement vegetation control measures along the shoreline of natal ponds in the Potholes Reservoir Unit and assist with pond rehabs in the Potholes Reservoir Unit. Timeframe: Spring and fall on-going as needed for vegetation control, fall 2007 for rehab.
- C. Strategy: Develop a package of projects that would utilize the Potholes Supplemental Feed Route water to develop habitat for Northern leopard frogs. Timeframe: Spring 2007.

2. Manage to increase upland game bird populations.

- A. Strategy: Maintain 30 winter feeders for upland birds, focusing primarily on California valley quail, relocate and expand feeders where necessary. Timeframe: Winter on-going.
- B. Strategy: Trap and transfer California valley quail into suitable habitat. Timeframe: Winter 2007 depending upon weather conditions.

3. Manage to attract migrating waterfowl

- A. Strategy: Complete the Frenchman Ponds (TD-01) wetlands improvement project. Timeframe: Spring – fall 2007
- B. Strategy: Develop a package of projects that would utilize the Potholes Supplemental Feed Route water to develop habitat for waterfowl. Timeframe: Spring 2007.

Agency Objective: Provide sustainable fish and wildlife related recreational and commercial opportunities compatible with maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations and habitats. Improve the economic well-being of Washington by providing diverse, high quality recreational and commercial opportunities.

1. Provide recreation compatible with fish, wildlife and habitat protection.

- A. Strategy: Survey islands within the Potholes Reservoir Unit for colonial nesting birds and post for seasonal access closure. Timeframe: Spring, on-going.

- B. Strategy: Construct phase three of the wildlife viewing trail on the Sprague Lake Unit. Timeframe: Spring 2007.
- C. Strategy: Construct a wildlife viewing area, trail and parking area east of the Job Corps Dike in the Potholes Reservoir Unit. Timeframe: Spring 2007.

2007 Performance Measures

Manage for State Listed and Candidate species:

- Protect 500 acres and enhance 12 acres in Section 17 of the Seep Lakes Unit for Washington ground squirrel management.
- Rehab Westlake ponds in the Potholes Unit for Northern leopard frog management.
- Control vegetation on the shoreline of 6 Westlake pond Potholes Unit for Northern leopard frog management.
- Develop a management plan for Supplemental Feed Route water.

Manage to increase upland game bird populations:

- Maintain 20 populations of California valley quail with supplemental winter feeding.
- Maintain approximately 115 acres of irrigated tree and shrub plots.

Manage to attract migrating waterfowl:

- Develop approximately 80 acres of attractive waterfowl habitat at the Frenchman Ponds (TD-01) wetlands improvement project.
- Maintain the 80 acres of waterfowl habitat at the Desert Lake (TD-02) wetlands improvement project by seeding spoils and berms; repairing and reinforcing berms; and controlling undesirable vegetation and fish.
- Develop a management plan for Supplemental Feed Route water.

Manage shrub-steppe habitats:

- Construct 3 miles of new boundary fence and exclude cattle in the Seep Lakes to manage for Washington ground squirrel.

Manage shallow ponds:

- Mow 3 acres of tall emergent vegetation on Gloyd Seeps wetland areas at the Farm Unit and flood to create shallow open water.
- Mow 5 acres of tall emergent vegetation on the Quality Hunting Area of the Desert Unit and flood to create shallow open water.

Manage weeds:

- Plant 10 acres of native grasses on Units 110 and 111 of the Upland Wildlife Restoration Units to reduce weed infestation.

Provide fire control on agency lands:

- Maintain 3 miles of fire-breaks on the Potholes Reservoir and Banks Lake Units.
- Reduce/eliminate fuel load along access roads and parking areas on all units with herbicides.

Provide recreation compatible with fish, wildlife, and habitat protection:

- Check and repost 4 islands within the Potholes Reservoir with signs to reduce human disturbances during the nesting season.
- Establish a parking area on the east side of the Quality Hunting Area of the Desert Unit.
- Construct phase three of the wildlife-viewing trail on the Sprague Lake Unit.
- Construct a wildlife viewing area, trail and parking area east of the Job Corps Dike in the Potholes Reservoir Unit.

Maintain facilities to achieve safe, efficient, and effective management and use of the wildlife area:

- Maintain shop, office, and all equipment to provide a safe and effective workplace.
- Upgrade phone system for multiple lines.
- Finalize Exhibit A of the 25-year management agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Finalize the water service contract with the Bureau of Reclamation to document the WDFW use of water for wildlife habitat.

Citizen Advisory Group Input

None

Want to see the full plan?

Go to -

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

Contacts:

WDFW Columbia Basin
Wildlife Area Office
(509) 765-6641